Preface by the translator (Madame Dupin)

I work in a nursing home. I only have a Bachelor's in English. I am mostly self-taught. I am certain there are mistakes in this text. My Latin (which is the result of 4 years of Latin classes in high school, as well as endless nights wherein I taught myself as much Renaissance Latin as I could) is not nearly proficient enough to allow me to translate such a text without the aid of dictionaries and AI to help with the editing and with providing clearer meanings to what I've translated. It doesn't help that English is not my first language.

When I was younger, I became fascinated by alchemists. I read the Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz in a single sitting. But, unfortunately, due to the times within which I live, I fell into chaos magick as most do who have interests in these subjects. I am not saying that chaos magick is evil or anything like that. It is just, for me, it led me to have a major existential crisis. It was during this time that I happened across Lev Shestov, Miguel de Unamuno, Simone Weil, Kierkegaard, and Dostoevsky. For the longest time, I felt comfortable with being a religious Existentialist – especially since dissident surrealists like David Gascoyne and Benjamin Fondane were also religious existentialists and followers of Lev Shestov. I felt this orientation allowed for me to preserve my independence and sense of individuality outside of the demands for conformity that run rampant within churches. My faith was an anarchistic rebellion against all laws, including physical ones.

Eventually, though, I was led back to the alchemists I had read when I was younger. I became enamored with Rosicrucianism. I found myself surrounded by enigmas I felt compelled to resolve. I took to studying the esoteric side of Christianity while pursuing the spiritual exercises and

disciplines of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (as elaborated upon by Israel Regardie and Chic and Tabitha Cicero).

What I am saying is that I am not an academic. This translation was a labor of love. I was mesmerized by this book. The fact that it has been untranslated for over 500 years increased its allure to me. I didn't have much of a choice in the matter. I had to read it.

I hope that this will be valuable to others who have interests similar to my own. Books such as this sell for hundreds of dollars sometimes. I wouldn't wish to place such a heavy financial burden on anyone.

(but hey, if you want: www.patreon.com/theunknownphilosopher - I also post music I've made, stories I've written, and tarot readings twice a week on there).

There were a few things that surprised me reading this book. First off, Johann Reuchlin was clearly heavily influenced by the Platonism of Marsilio Ficino, and the Kabbalah of and the reconciliation of Aristotle and Plato in Pico della Mirandola. It's also clear how much Reuchlin respected and admired Judaism. Although the Christian figure Capnion (who represents Johann Reuchlin) told the Jew, Baruchias, to give up the Talmud, most of the second book consisted of Baruchias expounding upon Jewish theology and the Kabbalah. Furthermore, I wasn't expecting Johann Reuchlin to be as influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and apophatic theology as he was. It is clear that he was familiar with Nicholas of Cusa and Meister Eckhart.

It's really a compelling text. I didn't feel like this was hard work. I didn't get exhausted doing this translation. It rather invigorated me.

Please do not judge my errors too harshly. I hope that you enjoy reading this as much as I did. Thank you. – Madame Dupin

A Letter of Recommendation from Conradus Leontorus

To Jacob Wimpheling, Greetings.

As soon as I left Mainz, I understood the truth of that saying common among our Gallic countrymen: "To be with a friend is not enough, whether present or absent." When I was with you, I felt I didn't enjoy your company as much as our friendship deserved, as if I had left unsaid everything I intended to say. This small letter will make up for that omission, and by sending it, I wish I could be with you now.

We were discussing the short book by the distinguished Lord von Spanheim, which you said was being printed in Basel. I asked if Doctor Johannes Reuchlin was involved, and you hesitated, almost denying it, which surprised me. What highly learned man in our age, known to you personally, would you consider to be a nobody? To overlook Reuchlin is to do a great disservice to the reputation of German scholarship and to your own studies.

He is a masterful interpreter of three languages: Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. He also diligently learned French while studying in Orléans. As a young man, he translated several orations, including, if I'm not mistaken, some by Xenophon in defense of Socrates. He has written many pleasing poems and numerous disputational letters filled with Greek and Hebrew insights.

Furthermore, to penetrate the secret doctrines of the Hebrews, he labored intensely for many years and has so thoroughly mastered their entire literature that you will not easily find anyone to rival him in Hebrew matters.

Endowed with this genius and wealth of learning, he has written a dialogue titled *"Capnion, or On the Wonder-Working Word."* I have never seen anything more eloquent or marvelous. It is divided into three books:

1. The first, under the character Sidonius, explains all the secrets of philosophy.
2. The second introduces Baruchias the Jew, who explains all the secret, portentous names and other Hebrew matters.
3. The third introduces Capnion, who approves and demonstrates the Christian faith using the teachings of the first two. In it, he connects all the wonder-working words to the name of Jesus, showing how the unutterable four-letter name of God (Tetragrammaton) has been made utterable.

If you read this dialogue, you will declare that no philosopher, Jew, or Christian can rightly be placed above Johannes Reuchlin. It would be a perpetual disgrace for us not to hold this man up against all the scholars of Italy.

Therefore, my dear Jacob, since I am going to Augsburg and don't know when I'll reach Basel, please write with great care and diligence to the printer Johannes Amerbach. Urge him to assign a place in his catalogue for your Johannes Reuchlin of Pforzheim.

Farewell, my dearest Jacob. I wish you happiness and prosperity. From Speyer, on the 11th of May, 1494.

Preface by Johannes Reuchlin of Pforzheim to the Book "Capnion" or "The Wonder-Working Word"

To the most distinguished lord, Johann von Dalberg...

I have observed that modern explorers of secret knowledge often stray far from the most ancient philosophical principles, particularly concerning operations that produce wonderful effects. They misunderstand the hidden powers of words, the energy of unusual sounds, and the characters of divine and secret names. This happens mainly because the sacred symbols and venerable signs of supernatural power can no longer be understood or read, having been blotted out by decaying script or corrupted by scribal errors.

As a result, weary and frustrated by fruitless effort, they either avoid this praiseworthy contemplation as terrifying or abandon what they started.

Moved by an incredible desire to please and a singular love for that pillar of all good arts, the outstanding Johannes von Dalberg (a doctor of solid theology, distinguished in the Carthusian order and in the publication of books, under whose instruction my hand was first trained in the humanities) I have undertaken this task. I am also bound by ancient friendship to Sebastian Brant of Strasbourg, a man most learned in both canon and civil law and skilled in polite letters, and to Johannes Amerbach, noble, wonderfully skilled in printing, and erudite in various disciplines. You wouldn't know whether these two brilliant men are more illustrious for their deeds or for their citizenship in Basel, which they adorn with great praise.

Moved by my bond with such men, I have dared to enter these great shadows and obscured hiding places of sacred, or rather secret words. I will bring forth into our age, as if from the inner shrines of oracles and the most ancient philosophy, as much as my memory supplies.

In this work, you will find gathered from their original books and languages almost all the names that wise men of ancient times used in their rites for miraculous operations—whether from Pythagorean sacraments and other ancient philosophers, the barbarous memorials of the Hebrews and Chaldeans, or the devout supplications of Christians.

I dedicate this work to you because sacred things are owed to sacred men, and priestly things to priestly princes. You surpass others not only in the dignity and power of your dominion but also in your indescribable skill in various literatures, as proven by your library filled with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew volumes—a genuine treasure of our nation, which I have always used freely.

Please accept this debate "On the Wonder-Working Word" between three philosophers, whom I have depicted debating among themselves (as the clash of different sects ought to do) so that the hidden property of the sacred name might shine forth more clearly. The final task is for us to choose the one supreme, wonder-working, and beatific name, with the easier practice being revealed by the hidden one.

In brief summary: Sidonius, first thought to be an Epicurean but later found to be sworn to no single school, sets out on a journey to learn all philosophy. He comes to Swabia and meets two philosophers in the town of Pforzheim: Baruchias the Hebrew, and Capnion the Christian. With them, he argues about various disciplines, divine and human things, opinion, faith, miracles, the powers of words and figures, secret operations, and the mysteries of signs. In this way, all nations that possess any excellent philosophy, liberal ceremonies, sacred names, and consecrated

characters are brought into question. An enumeration of the symbols from various languages for the rite of the true faith is carefully made, until at last Capnion, in the third book, gathers from all these sacred things that one name to which every sacred and virtuous power is said to be referred, i.e. the name that is blessed forever and over all things.

But let us now hear Sidonius himself.

Johannes Reuchlin's "Capnion" or "The Wonder-Working Word": The First Book

Sidonius: My friends Baruchias and Capnion, if there is one goal in all human nature that represents the pinnacle of all that we can desire (and since you two are my only listeners, I feel free to speak fearlessly), I think it is this: to perceive daily certain new and foreign things, or things felt in a new way. This desire for the soul's delight, always admiring some mystery, has recently driven my will to experience and often pushes me into any arduous work.

I can easily believe that not only my ancestral race, which was clearly noble for many ages and famous for its skill in net-making, but all of Sidon, from which I get my name and origin, and indeed my whole fatherland, have spurred me on to these sweet, yet hard labors. From the beginning, the Phoenicians were accustomed to investigate distant regions and indulge in the study of new things beyond belief. They first invented letters, a benefit they bestowed upon the Greeks. They sought out the reckoning of numbers and measured the lands and heavens. They were experts in natural and warlike arts. Ultimately, that people always observed the customs of many men and cities, which brought them the greatest glory and praise. (With your permission, I may praise my ancestors too much, but love of my country dictates it, and the truth is fruitful.)

For instance, the ancient doctrine of atoms first came from a man of my people, a Sidonian named Moschus, born before the Trojan War. You know well with what industry and genius the Phoenicians excelled. Even Lucan, more a historian than a poet, sang of them: "The Phoenicians first, if fame is to be believed, dared to mark sounds with rude figures. Not yet did Memphis know to bind together the lofty papyrus. Instead, languages were preserved through 'magical' or symbolic animals, which were carved onto rocks, birds, beasts, and other statues. "

Eager for these monuments and traces of praise, and led by a certain inclination of blood, I have for many years traveled through many seas and lands, seeking out the best orators and thinkers, so I might learn from one what to say, and from another what must be done. My fatherland and the vicinity of Tripoli allowed me to hear of diverse arts, though these are now becoming twisted by barbaric rites.

But I have gone further! After Lebanon and Syria, I traveled farther than that Menelaus who, hosting Telemachus and Pisistratus, told them of his wanderings: “I have indeed suffered not a few things, and with many dangers, my ships having been afflicted, my toil lasted into the eighth year, all the way to Cyprus, then to Phoenicia and the Egyptian fields, thence to the Ethiopians, and the Sidonians, and the Erebians; and in Libya, where horned serpents feed with the lambs.” After such a long sea journey, my labors continued until, having left Britain, then Gaul, I was led by the Rhine into Germany, so that I might see you wise men and prove it not just with my eyes, but with my ears. As Plautus said: "One who witnesses by hearing is of more value than ten eye-witnesses," especially in recognizing philosophical men, whom I have heard are celebrated everywhere.

To speak of you first, Capnion, I learned what kind of place Pforzheim is from the inscriptions in your books and tablets. I have wondered more at this than anything else: that woody Swabia should produce such a man. My traveling companions, students of the refined arts, responded that it's not

hard to believe such roughness could produce outstanding talent. They mentioned the bishop of Regensburg, in Greek 'Polyplemus', but by family name Albrecht, surnamed the Great, who was considered to surpass not only Aristotle but other primary Peripatetic philosophers, yet was both born and raised in Swabia. I myself have read several of his distinguished books, translated into Greek on account of their singular excellence.

They argued that your people easily migrate due to thin soil, the trouble of cultivating fields, and scarcity of money, as the region lacks abundant merchandise. I would judge that a migrating Swabian always brings a copious supply of the best precepts for finding better places. Thus, his power in learning, eloquence, and counsel comes not from being born in the forest (once called Bacenatis or Ordonia, now the "Black Forest"), but from his travels. I hear you have not only studied in Paris but traversed almost all of Gaul and Germany, and you spent years in the gymnasia of Italy and the city of Rome.

I see that the sharpness of the Pforzheim field contributes to native talent, and I believe it's true that a huge number of literary men have been born there. The fatherland has almost as much influence as the father himself, if one believes Porphyrio.

You have a long speech from a stranger discoursing about your region. But, unless I be thought a clumsy investigator, I must mention what I found in Phoenician authors concerning ancient monuments. In Troy, it's established that the younger Phorcys was a leader of the Phrygian army, as Homer testifies in the catalogue of ships: "That Phorcys was the leader of the Phrygians, and Ascanius."

When Ilium fell, the survivors were forced to seek new homes. Aeneas with Ascanius, and their companion Phorcys, with many others, sought Italy. While Ascanius founded a town under the

Alban mount, Phorcys the younger (descended from the elder Phorcys, a ruler of Sardinian and Corsican peoples whom the Titan Atlas saw before he was lost beneath the waves), the grandson of Euryalus, entered through Italy and the Insubres into Germany. He crossed into the gentile lake between the sources of the Danube and the Rhine, and through mountain plains, tended towards the setting sun.

There he found a river of the clearest water, full of fish, and on its bank a weak hut. Dragging his weary step towards it, he was met by an old man, weighed down with years and leaning on a staff. The old man, terrified by the great crowd, thought his end was near. But Phorcys asked what the river was called. The old man replied: "Its name is Aeneas." Astonished, Phorcys turned to the river and said in a subdued voice: "Are you that Aeneas, whom kindly Venus bore to Dardanian Anchises by the Phrygian Simois's wave?" (Virgil later transferred these verses into his Aeneid, delighted by the foreign antiquity.)

Taking this as a simple omen, the stranger decided to stay. He encouraged his multitude not to despise the divine oracle discovered in the name of the Trojan priest. To those whom Aeneas had left behind, another Aeneas now presented himself. The Phrygian leader, regal in spirit, ordered the citizens to make the barren field fertile, tearing up tree roots. In that place, he built a small town and a citadel, which from his own and his ancestor's name he called "Pforzheim." Such was his affection for the praiseworthy Aeneas that he chose to be called "the younger Aeneas," a perpetual monument to the Trojan hero.

As the population grew, he was forced to cut neighboring woods, cultivate fields, build villages, and rear cities. He founded many rustic and urban towns, marking them with names from his mother and homeland to memorialize his ancestral lineage. Yet these very names are now under threat, partly eroded by the relentless passage of time, and partly altered by the disrespect of foreign

invaders. What was once Euryalum is now Aurelium; Sibenus is now Siben; Scylla is called Scell; Medula was changed into "New Castle."

And so, the Gorgon-born daughters of Phorcys, figures of widespread and ancient renown, tended this very soil. In this pleasant location, Capnion’s town was founded. Its people preserve this legendary origin in their eternal memory, ensuring it will endure for all posterity. Lest it be forgotten, the monument of his companion Ascanius was also built in that city's kinship under the Alban mount, called "Long Alba" by an equal name. That name remains today within six miles of Pforzheim.

So, you see me painting a picture of your origin like a sailor's chart, showing that such great men, adorned in all learning, though from diverse places, were born from one root. I sought your conversation with a desire greater than for gold, silver, pearls, or all precious things, and found you here in the woods and valleys of Swabia.

Now, pay attention to why I have come. After being initiated into the arts of speaking, leading, and thinking, and then the disciplines of numbering and measuring, an admiration for earthly and natural things led me towards natural philosophy, with which I decided would become the culminating purpose of my life's work.

Concerning morals (which some consider a part of philosophy), I thought little work should be given. I don't judge it worthy of too much genius, because moral virtue consists in observing custom and common intercourse with life, similar to how elders teach young boys. Nature also contributes to the virtues, which cannot be taught but grow strong according to the institution of each region. What is called a virtue here is held to be a vice elsewhere due to local opinions. Thus, I say that virtue is nothing other than what men will. Therefore, the prudence of each virtue consists

solely in being able to persuade the common people or a judge, whether by oratorical eloquence, gifts, or flatteries, provided you are particularly charming while speaking.

In Ulpian, a most skilled jurist, one reads that a certain Barbarius Philippus, though a runaway slave, sought the praetorship at Rome; he was designated and installed to be a praetor, and his actions in that office were never challenged. The same author wrote concerning the status of men: "A man who is truly free must be considered free, even if a court has wrongly judged him otherwise, because the factual truth outweighs the legal error." And Paulus, a most experienced Roman jurist, says: "If today, according to an emperor, a candelabrum is declared to be made of silver, then it becomes silver, not household stuff; this is how error can establish a new legal reality."

For whatever has pleased either the people or the prince (or the judge) has the force of law through nothing else besides custom and constitutional law. As Julian says: "Since the laws themselves compel us for no other reason than that they have been accepted by the judgment of the people, and the people have conferred all its imperium and power upon the king by a royal decree," it clearly appears that all jurisprudence depends solely on the will of men. If it supports good men and subdues evil, it is called a good thing. But if the people's will is not aligned with what is good, then the opposite holds true, for ultimately, the only things that possess legal force are those which the people have either actively approved or passively tolerated.

Hesiod, in his Works and Days, where he writes much about kings and justice, thought that the common people often pay for the sins of the kings, that is, of the judges. Indeed, all judges, not only Hesiod himself, but also Homer and all antiquity, in fact, called them "kings," whose badge of jurisdiction is the scepter they carry. As a witness to this, there was that famous oath against Agamemnon by Achilles, explained in six or seven verses of the Iliad.

My words are not for the ignorant, but are spoken, as I believe, and as many of the most learned and humane men agree, in full view of those who are well aware that the practice of law, for all its public prestige and the high price commanded by legal experts, is considered a matter of little or mediocre importance. In other words, I speak to those who see it as of no or mediocre importance, a trifling matter, especially for a man who aims towards the highest and most worthy things, and who does not admire the fragile, perishable mockeries of glory, beauty, riches, and age.

A foolish critic might try to refute me by citing the impeccable authority of Cicero. But Cicero himself once dared to defend this very opinion of mine in court, and he did so in the presence of the great Seneca who, at the time, prided himself on his expertise in civil law. I ask you, Capnion, what ornament, dignity, or grace is situated in that study which depends on the opinion of petty men, busy with the distinctions and punctuation of words? It is proclaimed by all, plebeians and nobles alike, that this study alone fixes empty magisterial names. But these honors are full of daily anxieties, mercenary profits, and riches which no wise man should desire. Moreover, it begets many enmities for its cultivators, which do not allow a man desiring quiet of the soul to be quiet.

It is not difficult to know that what is observed by all is public law, and what is not, is not. Why, therefore, should I admire what is known to my butcher, cooks, weavers, bird-catchers, and hunters? Does knowing the name of a law and applying it to every event seem great to us? These are not noble arts. They are the products of futile routine, of bare necessity, and of the desperate struggle to make ends meet. They are the brutal compulsions of 'Need'—who is the very daughter of 'Hunger.' Think of it this way: who taught the parrot to mimic our words or the magpie to attempt our speech? It was a trainer, a mere technician of imitation, who himself is bound to repeat sounds he did not create, just like the legendary actor Satyrus. Therefore, I ask you: by what right can I attach this kind of practical skill, pursued not for its own sacred purpose, but for the sake of trade,

profit, and earthly desires entirely foreign to the higher mind, to the body of most holy philosophy? To do so would be to cripple philosophy itself. A philosophy that includes such mundane members would be as lame as a man without a foot, and as mute as a man without a tongue.

But I digress. I set these questions aside, for I scarcely know by what tempest of argument I have been blown so far off course. I return to my point. I have decided to place the whole course of my life in the contemplation of natural things, from which alone arises what we can truly call science. All other fields are merely its instruments: they are tools for calculation, methods for practical estimation, or, worse yet, mere figments of the imagination, inventing entities that are presumed to exist without body or matter and are therefore called 'simple' or 'immaterial.' Even if these abstractions have their uses, there exists a type of thinker who is not content to build knowledge from the evidence of our senses, which provides a firm, reliable foundation that neither deceives us nor can be deceived. Instead, they burden the mind with speculations about the most tenuous philosophical concepts and 'separate forms.' Since these constructs are not found in nature but are imagined to exist beyond it, they have been labeled 'Metaphysics.'

I do not dispute this to refute learned men, but to weigh with an equal balance from what source the love of knowing is drawn. On this subject, Capnion, you will permit me to mention your master, Aristotle. You are said to have trained extensively in his philosophical school, his intellectual 'wrestling grounds', and to have emerged from that rigorous training having won the highest honors, the equivalent of the victor's palm and golden rings. For I hear that our friend Baruchas here is a follower of Pythagoras, and of any other ancient sage or Magus who might have preceded him.

So, Aristotle, in the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*, explains his opinion, which is relevant here. Both of you listen, if I can explain it sufficiently in Latin. For Aristotle is shadowy and rough

in Greek sentiment and did not wish to be understood except with difficulty. His words are: "Our sense perceptions give us memory. From the repeated recurrence of memories about the same thing, we gain experience. For a single body of experience is formed from many individual memories. Finally, from this accumulated experience, a universal concept emerges in the mind, a single, unified understanding derived from the many particular instances. It is from this universal concept that the first principles of art and scientific knowledge arise."

You have heard Aristotle. Not dissimilar is Aesop, a witty and prudent poet, who produced this verse in the book *"Sellae"* concerning the generation of sciences: "Use begat me; memory bore me."

Therefore, since science must use limbs and sense as instruments (without which all things are ignored—the blind man does not know colors, nor the deaf the rhythm of poetry), it is necessary that we can comprehend only corporeal things. The most tenuous of body perpetually flows, as it were, to our senses through pores. Then the imagination itself introduces that very thing into the chamber of the mind, where the forms of things are unfolded. This is to say we comprehend external objects in the same way a light ray from an object is bent into the pupil of the eye. The very fact that we perceive them this way proves that all such things are corporeal entities, dependent on a physical nature.

Whence it seemed more correct to me that Empedocles said: "We know like by like." Nor is there any pause or rest in this constant flow of perception. As Lucretius says, 'We perceive perpetually.' And indeed, living beings are endowed with a variety of senses, each one specialized to accurately capture its own specific kind of data from the world. But how can we call this 'accurate'? Because while the senses can sometimes be deceived or can deceive us, our very ability to recognize this

deception still depends on the senses themselves. No one can claim to understand the world without relying on their senses at all.

But, by Hercules, I must not digress further. That cunning interpreter of Epicurus tries to draw me back to his master's view, arguing: “The greatest source of error is not the senses themselves, but the opinions our minds add to them, making us see things that weren't actually perceived.” And indeed, what could be more reliable than seeing things as they openly appear? This simple truth is ignored by those who try to scale heights beyond nature, only to become trapped in a philosophical dead end from which they cannot escape. While the vast, tangible universe offers endless subjects for study, these thinkers instead exhaust themselves with mere figments and abstractions. They invent 'bare entities,' 'ideal forms,' 'immovable divine beings,' 'subsistences,' 'first dignities of reason,' 'primordial principles,' and 'incorporeal substances'—positing pure, simple divinities dwelling beyond the heavens and living a perfect life. All these concepts (for which they use the poets as authorities) are nothing but clever fictions. They are the alluring baits that capture our curiosity and the comforting solaces for our restless minds, fabricated by a singularly specious art of intellectual make-believe.

Let all those meditating on such fantastical things bid us farewell; let them go to their couches and sleep the whole night. Let us take Homer as our authority: he depicts even Jupiter being overcome by sleep, as if all other celestial beings were of no account. This suggests that Jupiter alone is supreme—yet about him we have no clear knowledge, only what seem to be dreams. The same poet cleverly hints at this, I believe, when he describes the dream sent to Agamemnon as a message from Jupiter. What real knowledge do we have of Jupiter? Our understanding of him is little better than a dream.And what can we truly know about 'First Dignities' and 'Fundamental Principles'? Concerning these, the Peripatetic philosophers, who are quite shrewd, and whom all of Germany

now follows to the exclusion of other great authors, contend that there can be no scientific knowledge of them. Their reasoning is this: scientific knowledge and demonstration must be clearer and better known than the things they prove. But all knowledge depends on these first principles, and you cannot demonstrate a principle itself, since it is the foundation for everything else. It exists prior to all other knowledge. Yet, it would be absurd for this very principle, the source of all light, understanding, and knowledge, to itself remain utterly unknown.

Whence shall we know the principles? From sense. Hear your Aristotle again, Capnion, in the first book of the *Topics*: "If anyone should doubt whether all snow is white or not, he needs the senses." Therefore, the faith which edifies the sciences from principles is wholly in things subjected to nature by the senses. None of those things not connected to body and matter are rightly enclosed within the limits of science.

If this is so, the knowledge of things the Greeks call 'physics' (natural philosophy) will suffice. It investigates the conditions of things that truly are and are perceived by us without a veil, their causes, being, times, places, modes, events, wholes, and parts. “This is the domain of natural philosophy: to inquire into the causes of things, such as: What causes the earth to tremble? By what power do the deep seas swell, burst their bounds, and then recede? What explains the sun's eclipses and the moon's changing phases? What is the origin of humankind and beasts, of rain and lightning? What is the nature of the constellations—Arcturus, the Pleiades, the Hyades, and the twin Bears? Why do the winter suns hasten to set so early, and what causes the long, lingering nights?"

The speculative philosophy of nature, physics, embraces all things. The most learned men can wonderfully delight in it their whole life. For its sake, as you heard before, I traveled through many places and dangers to see the wonders of nature. I myself, having set out for India, hoped to see

the monstrous prodigies said to be seen there, if rarely, with plain eyes: Manticores, golden water, the Magnet stone, Pantarba, Pygmies, Sciapods, the Tiger, the Phoenix, Pearls, and the Ichthyophagi. Then through Africa, to see another race that has a dog for its king, by whose motion they augur commands.

I omit other things I could hope for but not behold: one-eyed princes, Anthropophagi, Cynocephali, most of which are fabulous. Also of fountains and wonders, part are true which they tell, part are adorned with fictions. For instance, in Asphaltis, the lake truly generates bitumen, though some reports are contrary. In Dodona, the spring of Jupiter kindles extinguished torches and extinguishes kindled ones. Hammon's spring is cold by day, hot by night. An island opposite Tinaeum abounds with warm springs that increase and diminish in the sea—a thing I experienced with men from Tergeste. And the water of Lyncestis makes men drunk like wine.

Sidonius continued: Furthermore, among the ancient Suebi peoples, near the river Philisium by the town of Geppi, a spring flows as if for him alone. I would run out of days in a year if I wished to recount all the individual wonders of nature, which are, however, not unknown to us. And because I have learned from scholars that you are so rich in varied knowledge from both books and direct experience that nothing, large or small, escapes you, whether seen firsthand or known from texts, I easily conclude it is futile for me to speak of wonders. What I marvel at for its novelty, you, through your frequent contact with such things, consider commonplace.

But I must ask about one undisputed wonder in Germany: by what virtue or doctrine do men like you, who are grave, sound, and of the best judgment, possess such a divine cast of face, such charm in words, such humanity in reception? From the very moment I entered and greeted you, streams of wisdom have flowed in your conversation. Your universal manners show you to be perfect men. It is incredible how much I rejoice in enjoying your company, which is adorned with learned words,

polished speech, and worthy sentiments. This liberal, munificent conversation with you soothes and calms me, entirely relieving the many great labors I have undertaken.

Baruchias interjected, stirred: Listen, Capnion, to what Sidonius has produced. I would easily believe his great claims about the Phoenicians, if only they didn't damn almost the entire East to ignorance and barbarity. They claim that some Scythian or Sarmatian tribes, as enemies of humanity and learning, have so invaded and held that region that no one who cultivates the arts remains. But you, Sidonius, how many stupors do you force me into with your eloquence?

Sidonius replied: The quality you praise so highly in me is, Baruchias, a most changeable one. I know well enough that you have given the name 'eloquence' to my meager efforts. What have I expressed in my little speech is but the well-known natural disposition of that first race of men? A thing all history hands down and which is publicly known. I also touched upon the praise of your Swabia, of which you are both rich heirs. No further spectacle is needed beyond you yourselves.

(Then, as if with a garrulous tongue, a certain frenzy poured from his mouth, arguing that nothing in our nature is truly sensible or worthy of art or discipline. He claimed that if science exists at all, it is about things subject to nature and open to the senses, not about divine things, about which he judged no true knowledge is granted to man.)

When Baruchias interrupted this speech, Sidonius said most learnedly: I must ask your forgiveness. A kind of innate thoughtlessness in my speech compelled me, Capnion, to pass over a man of your venerable character who stands as a divine model for our age with your profound learning, which is a veritable ocean of knowledge. It was this rashness that caused me to neglect the proper courtesies in this discussion. It is an old custom that whoever stammers the most especially strives to speak the most. The field of speaking is more open to the ignorant, which is what happened to

me: while you deferred, I, a herald of vulgar wisdom, broke the silence. Please bear it with a calm mind, Capnion.

Capnion said: But you, proceed freely, and weave together what you have begun.

After Sidonius persisted and spoke learnedly about many things, Baruchias said to Sidonius: You go beyond what our philosophers are accustomed to. They, like jackdaws, chatter whole days about every business with one barbaric noise, employing no ornaments, no flower of eloquence, nor the duty of an orator. You would think they were discussing the common trade of the vulgar, bidding for a pledge at an auction, the tumult of bacchants, a trivial banquet, or the taunts of buffoons, not most sacred philosophy. From their custom, and from this contagion and decline, I have contracted a similar habit. Someone might not vainly throw the little verse of Tyndareus from Euripides at me: “You live barbarously, since you are an old man among barbarians.”

Therefore, let me be clear: I am content to say no more on this matter. To hold forth about our homeland, about you, Capnion, and about our noble friend, would force me into a false modesty that would diminish both your reputation and my own. But your own brilliant merits and your renown throughout the world rightly forbid such a disservice. Furthermore, for me to try and embellish with more words what I have already praised so highly is simply beyond my ability. It would be a futile effort, as pointless as carrying owls to Athens as the Greek proverb goes.

But that you believe science arises only concerning sensible things, I greatly wonder. You find so much light in bodies, so many varied things, rising at any moment, subject to storm and whirlwind, bound to daily motion, inconstancy, and corruption, and yet you think they possess firmness and truth? You think nothing is more contrary to sincere and perfect science than the 'sensible'. I, however, think that which appears corporeal, which, as you said, flows through certain apertures

of our senses, not without very thin little coverlets piercing the air until they reach our bodies, after the mind engages with those fleeting sensory impressions (for everything we perceive externally is naturally in flux), does it manage to remain calm and steadfast? And if so, is it from this very stability that the glorious achievement of 'divine humanity', or the deification of man, is bestowed upon us? I deny that there is any certain doctrine, opinion, or judgment concerning things of this sort. We can distinguish ice from water, judging one a fluid, the other hard and firm, even though one was born from the other yesterday and may dissolve back the day after. But that a constant and perpetual science about them can subsist, that I utterly deny.

Not only under the leadership of Pythagoras, whose follower you wish me to be (an honor I willingly accept, since I know that Plato, that supreme god of philosophers, held Pythagoras's disciples in such esteem that Philolaus bought his books for ten thousand denarii despite his poverty), but Aristotle also agrees with us in this matter, whose patronage we happily use. In the first book of his *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle establishes the criteria for true scientific knowledge. After examining what kind of cause we must identify in order to know something truly, and what distinguishes a correct method from a merely learned one, he states this fundamental principle: “What we know with true scientific certainty cannot be otherwise than what it is.” This is not foreign to Plato, who divided the world into the primary intelligible part and the secondary sensible part, adding that the former is judged by mind with reason, the latter by opinion with sense. See how you, reading Epicurus, build all things with obscure language upon nothing else but dust. Confronted by your arguments, which are backed by such eminent authorities, I am easily defeated.

And I should feel no shame in being overcome and proven wrong by you, a man of such exceptional genius, learning, integrity, and excellence, especially since, by the decree of my elders, I have been forbidden from engaging with philosophy, even on a superficial level I, with such great

patrons, am easily conquered. Therefore, Germany, although religious, nurtures few learned Hebrews, as they persuade the studious to abhor philosophers, fearing that through curiosity one might fall into errors, of which they believe philosophers are the chief authors. But I have done what the eager are wont to do: the more I was deterred from philosophy, the more fervently I drank it in, according to opportunity and my capacity. I confess I have read Aristotle and peered into Plato, whence came what I cited before. Even without them, the great diversity among the greatest men writing about natural things, each with immortal praise, would have convinced me that truth cannot consist in such contradictions.

Should I first proceed from the streams to the source? I think you, Capnion, will not deny that we must know the universal thing as it is established to be. Otherwise, opinion would deceive. But the universe has its own principles, even for your fellow follower of Epicurus, Lucretius, who says: “All things must be known from their principles.” He states that all things in the universe are derived from diverse fundamental principles. The discord between these principles creates chaos through their clashing interactions, through their conflicting intervals, divergent paths, unstable connections, opposing weights, violent collisions, random encounters, and erratic motions, all mingling together in a state of perpetual conflict. Therefore, we must understand all things by tracing them back to their first principles. It is from these principles, their fundamental rule and standard, that we can logically demonstrate even the most complex and derived concepts. This is the proper path to knowledge, just as one must pass through the doorway to enter the inner sanctum. But when there is error at the very doorways, how can the inner sanctum be correctly reached? They err who, ignorant of the way, nevertheless proceed. They wander at the crossroads, torn apart now by one path, now by another.

Shall I begin with your Phoenicians, whom you think were the first investigators of nature? We can trace this line of inquiry back to Thales himself. And though he was from Miletus, he was also descended from the most noble Phoenician, Cadmus (the son of Agenor) who tradition holds was the very first to dispute and write about the nature of the universe and, if Plato is to be believed, was called the first wise man. After innumerable attempts and unwearying studies, for which he abandoned the republic and high magistracies, what did he find? Hear his celebrated idea: “Water is the principle of all things.” From water all things proceeded, and into water all things will be resolved. If we entrust the world to Thales's judgment, we must always fear floods, for nature is subjected to this liquid, which may collapse as a result of any motion of water. I need not even mention how his theory works against the very principles of sound architecture, for it would be like choosing a swamp as the foundation for a house.

We could interpret Thales as having referred not just to a specific river, but rather (as I believe) to a primordial, fluid influence from which all things flow, a primary source that could also serve as the origin for all subsequent, secondary causes. This is what I believe Homer was pointing to when he referred to Oceanus in the line: “Oceanus, the father of all, and Tethys the mother.” Yet his compatriot Anaximander, his successor, went far away, decreeing that all things sprout from the infinite. Add a third Milesian, Anaximenes, a disciple of Anaximander, who dreamed that all things arise from air and return into air. Heraclitus of Ephesus, a despiser of philosophers, put forth that a fertile element, fire, begets all things and all things are brought back to it.

To continue the historical sequence properly, since doing otherwise makes as little sense as celebrating the Roman city of Veii for events that happened before the Trojan War, the next in this line of thinkers was the illustrious Anaxagoras. He was a citizen of Clazomenae who later renounced his political life and public honors for the sake of philosophy, becoming a philosopher

of great renown. His major contribution was the concept of a universal mind or ordering principle (nous), which he saw as the cause that sets matter in motion and governs the generation of all things. After him came Archelaus of Athens, the son of Apollodorus (not to be confused with another, Homeric Archelaus from Miletus). He taught that the cause of all existence was an infinite, dense air. It is for this theory concerning the physical world that he earned the title of 'physicist'.

There followed Pythagoras of Samos, the most arcane of all philosophers, from whom that art first received its name. He did not err but dissented from others, constructing the universe from numbers. He learned this discipline from the most ancient Syrians and Chaldeans. By later illuminating this wisdom with Greek language and reasoning, he demonstrated such divine insight to humanity that people did not hesitate to regard him as a god. I will refrain from overly praising this prince of philosophers, who has no equal in the former age and no successor in the later. And at the same time, to avoid the appearance of excessive flattery, especially since you have associated me with his arts and virtues, I will leave it to you to sing the praises of your chosen master, Epicurus. Though I must confess, I am astonished that such a man was born in Athens and not in some remote countryside. He affirmed the principles of things are twofold: small bodies and void space. In contrast, Empedocles of Agrigentum enumerates four elements: fire, air, water, and earth, with two principal powers: Strife, which scatters, and Friendship, which brings together. Plato, disciple of Socrates, taught three beginnings: God, the forms of things, and matter. From these, the sensible figure results. Aristotle, more famous for his arts than Alexander, proposed that all things in the world coalesce when primal matter, stirred by an innate desire for perfection, undergoes a process of change to realize a specific form.

Whoever among these philosophers attempted to pinpoint the fundamental nature of reality ended up replacing the concept of gradual 'change' with the more absolute concept of 'death', a total

dissolution they saw as a more potent force for drawing all disparate matter back into a formless, primal unity. Do you, Sidonius, presume that in such great diversity and contention of so many ample, wise men, a certain faith of truth can stand firm? They fight with such wondrous contest around the principles that you cannot know to whom to award the palm. As Firmianus says, no one has descended from heaven to bear sentence about these opinions.

Some approve Epicurus; I approve Pythagoras. But our own personal philosophical allegiances disqualify us. We are like biased judges dismissed from the case and excluded as stubborn partisans. So, where does that leave us? How many fundamental principles are there? The plain truth is that a major dispute over this very question has always raged among the most famous philosophers, and it remains unresolved to this day. Therefore, if the first principles themselves are still uncertain, how can you expect me to possess a sure and certain science about the things which are said to derive from those principles? After all, Aristotle himself established that we only have true knowledge of something when we understand its fundamental principles, its cause, and its constituent elements. And not just that, but we must know why its cause is necessarily so, and cannot be otherwise.

Cease therefore to seek firmness in perishable things. Entrust acorns to swine, hay to oxen, the sensible omen of a storm to frogs and crows. Let brute mortals sense; let us strive for higher things and embrace with eternal mind not the fleeting and fragile under heaven, but the eternal above the heavens. I will not try to force these profound concepts upon our uninitiated men, when even the most learned minds scarcely grasp them. They would accuse me of divorcing science from the real world, of creating a knowledge detached from nature's constant motion and change.And they would be right to say this, for we are caught between two irreconcilable truths: we strive for the

permanence of scientific knowledge, yet we are surrounded by nature's raging torrent which is a chaotic, unstable flux where we can only ever grasp a single, fleeting point in time.

Did the preacher of Ecclesiastes (whether Solomon or Isaiah) err? He says: “That which was, is that which will be... A generation passes and a generation comes.” How will you wash unless the signs change? How can the body be nourished unless it first breaks down and transforms the vital substance of food and drink, converting it into the various parts of the body it sustains? Cattle become dung, dung manure, manure grass, grass nutrition, nutrition cattle. All things run in a circle, driven as wave drives wave, day the hour, the hour the moment. This absorbs what another ejected. Nature is never idle. It ceaselessly shapes and reshapes existence, sculpting a horse from wax, then remolding it into a lion, and from that lion, dissolving the form to create a man, only to destroy him in turn. One survives another; the later buries the former. One generation succeeds another, and it is always the younger who buries the old. One Lucilla follows another; a second Secunda replaces the first Secunda; a new Faustus arises after the Faustus of Antoninus. So it goes with all things. A Celer serves under Hadrian, and then another Celer follows. Consider the entire court of Augustus: his wife, his daughter, his elder sister, Agrippa, his kinsmen, his close friends, Arius, Maecenas, his priests, his doctors. In fact, the entire court is gone. Their mistress was Death. And in the face of this relentless cycle of decay and replacement, do you expect to establish for me a perpetual science? How could I ever know for certain if a historian wrote the truth about these fleeting shadows when he wove his narrative?

Consider the greatest minds, all ultimately defeated by the nature they sought to master: Hippocrates, who cured countless diseases, still succumbed to death. Heraclitus, who filled the cosmos with his elemental fire, is said to have died covered in dung. Democritus was killed by a swarm of minuscule creatures born from his own body. The same fate awaits us all in our mortal,

fleshly prisons. And look at the very substance of the world and see how it transforms! In the natural world, even within the kingdom of trees, we find things that blur this line: what appears to be wood transforms into stone, as we see in the case of coral. Even in your own scripture, the Alkoran, it is written: “What was it first? Was it of wood? Was it of spirit?” they ask. And the rod of Moses, now a staff, now a serpent, need I elaborate on its transformations for you? I will be brief, for you are not some infant to whom I must spoon-feed mashed food. There is nothing, no subtle trick, no intricate artifice, no woven mystery, that escapes your understanding. So I ask you: why is it that when I consider our innate, sharp talents for investigating nature, our intellectual strength still falls short? Why is a scruple of doubt always injected into our thoughts? It is like a thorn driven deep into the heel that can never be torn out.

How can we, who do not yet fully understand our own soul, the very principle by which we live, breathe, feel, and think, its true nature and inner workings, how can we possibly presume to make infallible judgments about the essential nature of every other thing in creation? You know how many varieties and labyrinths surround it. Epicurus says the soul is a mixture from fire and air. Xenophanes, from earth and water. Parmenides, from earth and fire. Empedocles and Critias, blood. Anaximenes, air. Hipparchus, fire. Critolaus the Peripatetic, the fifth essence (aether). Democritus, a mobile spirit in atoms. Zeno, a spirit concrete with the body. Heraclitus the physicist, a spark of stellar substance. Heraclitus Ponticus, light. Hippocrates, a tenuous vapor. Posidonius, an ideal form. Pythagoras and Philolaus, harmony. Xenocrates, a self-moving number. Plato, an essence moving itself. Aristotle, Entelechy (a glorious new name he invented, meaning 'the form of perfection,’ as if it were the inherent purpose of a bodily organ). However, Aristotle's discourses on the soul, which treat it as mortal, ought to be refuted. This is the position of a man of great

integrity and the highest dignity among the Gauls, Gregory of Nazianzus, who makes this argument in his book Against the Eunomians.

Therefore, we who are ignorant of ourselves, how do we hope to obtain science of the rest? Up to the times of Jerome and Augustine, nothing certain about the soul was established. With these mutually conflicting opinions, how can we know? Regarding you, Capnion, I have no doubts. You follow the teachings of the Nazarene, Jesus Christ. And of this doctrine, those two great men, Jerome and Augustine, have been the most learned heralds, shining forth like two divine lights.

You have my opinion: concerning corporeal things, which fit the swiftness of the moment and are altered by nature's torrent, and on account of the ignorance of principles, the hidden recesses of causes, and the twilight of shadows, human science cannot be so quickly acquired, firmly sat, and faithfully remain. Before you add the changed thing to your thought, it has already changed. Consider the story of Empedocles: I can picture the fiery passion of his soul launching an assault, and I might believe I understand how he probed the nature of the soul. But at the very moment I speak of him, the truth is that 'Empedocles is nothing', since he is dead and gone. Yet a legend will be told about this non-existent man, and future generations will place more faith in the storyteller's words than in the direct evidence of the long-dead philosopher himself.

Furthermore, if you were to try and define, in a single moment, the sum of a man's knowledge, as the poet Lycophron did when he produced a long, convoluted discourse defining a man's essence as a 'foolish substance' or calling a 'pale-skinned man' a mere 'spontaneous image', you would still fail. You cannot, through such abstract definitions, escape the fundamental, ever-changing flux of the world and the rapid torrent of nature. Reality offers us no fixed point to grasp. At every single moment, the present slips from our fingers. The universe is like a spinning sphere, never at rest in a single state. Whatever things exist merely brush against this instant before being swept away,

enclosed within this endless motion. I have described this reality, a reality ‘adorned with varied learning’, which is, in fact, the very meaning of its Greek name, Poikilia; indeed, variety alone exists. Therefore, since it is always in motion, the matter is always otherwise, and one thing drives another. Therefore, in this storm of perpetual change, the light of understanding can find nothing stable to reflect upon, and the focus of our own thoughts is constantly broken and blurred by the relentless force of transformation. Wherefore Ecclesiastes confirms: “I understood that in all of the works of God, man cannot find out the reason of those things which are done under the sun.” The more he labored to seek, the less he found. You are correct in saying this was Socrates's view. However, he did not reject the possibility of knowledge entirely, after all, he vigorously debates many topics throughout Plato's works. Rather, he rejected natural science, i.e. the empirical investigation of the physical world. His true pursuit was a much higher form of knowledge: the divine or philosophical understanding of virtue, the soul, and the eternal forms.

Now, there are, of course, the well-regarded practical arts of human life, such as the blacksmith's, the farmer's, the domestic, the civil, the military, and the rustic arts. These pursuits keep mortals busy and prevent stagnation, while also contributing significantly to both public welfare and private affairs. All of these depend on human prudence and will. Furthermore, the systems we ourselves establish through our deliberate design hold validity by human law. Anyone who disobeys these rules, these precepts we have devised whether through long experience or simple arbitrary decree, is in error and is a transgressor. However, Socrates held that all such things belong to the realm of opinion; they seem to be valid, but cannot be truly known with certainty. He believed that the only things which are truly necessary and reliable must be sought from divinity alone.

And so, the man who is famously reported to have said 'he knew nothing' appears to me to have accomplished all he did not through human intellect alone, but by a divine gift. It was precisely for this merit that the oracle of Apollo judged him, not as a mere man, but as a god (as you, Sidonius, are so poetically convinced), to be the wisest of all. The histories of antiquity would confirm our argument, and would do so quite powerfully, if we were not too weary to consult them. The records of our elders inform us about Heliodorus, a shepherd in Boeotia near Mount Helicon. At sunrise, he heard the harmonious concert of the Muses. Approaching, he saw the divine troops and their dance and began to imitate their song. The Muses, not spurning his simplicity, offered him laurel twigs and reeds; with these, he suddenly attained the poetic art: not by nature but by God.

The same pattern holds for other legendary figures. Consider Homer's bard, Demodocus, who was gifted with divine song. Or the Cretan king Minos, who is said to have learned all things from Jupiter himself during their frequent conversations in the sacred cave on Mount Ida. Tradition also tells us that Neleagoras of Eleusis was taught by nymphs, and the Cretan sage Epimenides gained his wisdom from a single, extraordinarily long, and divinely sent sleep. Then there was Aristeas of Proconnesus, a philosopher renowned for his musical knowledge. A strange rumor surrounded him: that his soul could leave his body and, after long journeys, return to it. Although he possessed immense knowledge, people believed he had no human teacher, but was instructed directly by a god.

Thus, Socrates, a man of supreme perfection, judged by Apollo's own testimony to be the wisest, nevertheless deliberately turned away from the rigorous study and investigation of natural philosophy. And yet, no secret of nature was hidden from him. The Stoics explain this paradox by asserting that his understanding came not from human reasoning alone, but from divine assistance.

He himself referred to this divine source as his 'daimonion'. Whether this was a voice he heard, a vision he saw, or some other means through which he perceived the divine, it allowed him to comprehend the world in a way that transcended ordinary human learning.

But from your traditions I proceed to my own, which I believe are more trustworthy. Antiquity itself, in highest honor, produced by fame and committed to letters, say that the Hebrew nation (my ancestors), following a certain God with venerable worship (whose name they concealed unless it would become cheap), followed him through forty years in the desert, through pathless ways, mountains, valleys, and waters. He accompanied them with paternal affection while they sacredly loved and obeyed him.

This God, therefore (by whatever name you choose to address Him) ultimately descended in a cloud not to the vast multitude, but to one man: Moses, who had pleased Him through his constant spiritual devotion. God's purpose was to appoint seventy men who would help govern the people with diverse skills and explain divine will through various arts, according to what each situation required. However, since such profound understanding and ability cannot be achieved by human effort alone, for we maintain that the human mind is incapable of grasping matters of such sublime and constant mutability, God did not rely on their 'natural industry.' Instead, He distributed to the seventy elders a share of the same divine spirit He had first infused into Moses. The moment this spirit rested upon them, they began to prophesy, and they continued to do so from that time onward.

Sacred history demonstrates this same principle with another example: that of the most dedicated craftsmen. God infused His spirit into supremely skilled men like Bezalel and Oholiab, enabling them to execute all the work for the Tabernacle with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, even inventing new techniques necessary for the sacred sanctuary. This brings me back to your own classical writers. In Plato's dialogue, the Ion, we read about the poet Tynnichus of Chalcis, whose

story is a notable example. It is from this very concept, I believe, that Ovid derived his famous line: “There is a god within us; by his moving, we are inspired, and our spirit draws breath from heavenly realms.”

Wherefore, Sidonius and Capnion, I grant to ingenious men caution, prudence, acuteness, cleverness, docility, intelligence, and opinion. But concerning any sensible things, I deny that constant, pure, and infallible science is for man, unless received not by human discipline but by divine tradition, which we Hebrews call Kabbalah, which means ‘to receive.’ In this, our ancestors, to whom fame added the name of wisdom, exercised themselves: Abraham, Simon the son of Yochai, the second Abraham surnamed Azopha, the Ramban, the Raconatensis, and the rest. Through many years, they were studious concerning divine religion, institutions, solemnities, rites, temples, observances, and sacred mysteries.

Then Sidonius said: The river of your speech has rolled forth not just pebbles, but great, unshaped boulders of argument. A curse on those elders who, as you say, tried to bar you from philosophy! For what heights could you have reached if you had been permitted to fully penetrate the books of the philosophers, as I have never heard a speech more abundant in learning, or more fiercely argued, than this one of yours? I am left at a loss, with no strategy to breach the formidable wall you have built against my feeble words. It is futile to fight against you, now that you have overwhelmed me with such force. Therefore, I will fall silent, but not before issuing this one warning: it is a grave error to claim that a man can be ignorant of what he himself sees, hears, and touches. This is as absurd as the character Solinus in Plautus, who becomes a laughingstock by doubting his own existence despite touching, seeing, and hearing himself. After all, who has ever seen a cloud and not judged it to be dark? Who has ever sensed a fire and not judged it to be hot?

If you would only listen to Epicurus, you would find that he rightly placed the origin of all true knowledge in the primary evidence of the senses.

But that you contend divine things are known by men, I will not easily concede. If divinity is comprehended by a knower, you will be forced to join divinity and the human, which are maximally opposite. Divinity lacks beginning and end; human things are closed by all limits. Between the finite and the infinite, as the Peripatetics attest, there is no proportion. Therefore, Lucretius said wisely: “To join mortal with eternal, and to think they can consist and mutually interact, is folly.” What is more impossible than the mortal united with the immortal?

I truly, even if it could be done, would not call down such trouble upon the gods, that they should assist us mortals as teachers. Such a thing I would scarcely ask of a friend even.

And Baruchias said: I hold this Latin Sardanapalus, whom the world knows as Lucretius, in suspicion, convinced that he has wronged both true philosophy and the entire divine order. And if you will pardon my frankness, his position here, as in so many other parts of his work, directly contradicts itself. But let us touch on the matter. When he described the rites of Cybele and affirmed that armed men ran around her effigy, thinking she foretold how to defend the fatherland, and yet that this was vain to believe, he subjoined: “Which things, however well disposed, are far removed from true reason.” For the whole nature of the gods must enjoy the highest peace: “Far removed from our affairs, far separated. Free from all pain, free from dangers, powerful by its own resources, needing nothing of us, it is neither won by merits nor touched by anger.” From which it appears the gods bestow nothing from their clemency, lest they be affected by trouble.

But in the following book he says: “That god must be said to be a god, illustrious Memmius. Who first found that principle of life which is called Wisdom, and which by art placed life in such great

fluxes and darkness in so tranquil and clear a light." This speech offers nothing unless philosophy is a breath of divine illumination. Compelled by truth, he confesses what we have wrested from his hands. I am silent that he asserts the soul is mortal, yet now that it returns to the celestial principle. In another poem he says: "Thus, what is of the earth returns to the earth; but what is of celestial origin, the radiant halls of heaven welcome back once more." Does he not fear to be refuted as thoughtless? With embellished sayings, he hoped to deceive us or render us doubtful. I beg you, allow him to sing among poets, not to preside among philosophers.

But if you, or anyone, are moved by his decrees or by any others in Epicurus's impure faction, I would cry out that this sect is the nurse of the foulest things, planted in the frenzy of Leucippus and irrigated by Democritus. I would rouse all philosophers to argue against them; yet for cutting down this sacrilegious faction, you don't need an army of geniuses.

Capnion now spoke: You, Baruchias, cease these insults; let us think on the thing itself. I see you both as explorers of the highest things, endowed with the highest genius, singular copiousness, and faculty of speaking. You have brought forth many splendid, wise things pertaining to the matter. From the various wares of each, a most noble tasting is offered. But when I reflect on what I, personally, can contribute to this high-level discussion worthy of such great debaters, I am filled with self-pity. I would never dare to impose my crude and unrefined speech upon your most learned ears, were it not for one redeeming purpose behind my presence. I joined your conversation deliberately and with a specific strategy: so that my own roughness and inexperience would serve as a dark backdrop, making the dignity and brilliance of you, the most lettered of men, shine all the more brightly by contrast. For just as the color white gleams most vividly against black, so does any quality appear more distinct when placed beside its opposite.

Sidonius said: Go on. I ask you, let's forgo this tone; the matter at hand does not call for it. What need of renunciation of praise when we judge you most worthy? You are not new among us. Therefore, Capnion, please proceed and explain your views to us. A setting like this, dedicated to philosophy, requires solitude and silence. Let nothing disturb us; we must be free to listen, and you must be free to speak without interruption.

Capnion said: I will do easily what you wish, while you bear my mind with no displeasure. And if my memory serves me correctly, by God, I perceive that the two of you are locked in a battle, having moved beyond the main opposing forces and their entrenched positions, and are fighting over two core issues. First, that no science about things both supernal and infernal can be acquired by human means, both on account of human imbecility, as far as it looks to divine things, and by the temporary mutability and continuous alteration of natural things, which is considered a barrier to perfect knowledge. A second obstacle is the idea that the gods would be intolerably annoyed by the daily desires of men seeking their favor in order to be granted knowledge. Most importantly, for this kind of knowledge to exist, divinity would have to coincide with human operation, forcing a unifying bond between the most different things.

To explain this briefly: we must weigh the words of your arguments. My discussion will use clear reasons, not hidden principles.

What is the purpose of the eyes, set in their sockets, if not to see? This is their one proper function. Without it, the gift of sight would be useless. As Doryx in Euripides said, “Whoever a man is, even if a slave, he rejoices to behold the light.” What is the soft cartilage of the ear for, if not to drink in voices? Virgil himself suggests this when he writes, “He drank the voice with his ears.” The nostrils are for smelling, the tongue for tasting. The eye is nourished by color, the ear by sound, the nostrils by fragrance, the tongue by flavors, and touch by soft things.

Let us suppose there were no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or sense of touch. What benefit would color, sound, odor, or texture be? They would be vain, empty, and considered nothing. I speak not of the physical sense organs, but of their powers and faculties. Without these faculties, sharp judgment would be absent, and all would be confusion. The eye would try to see sound, the ear to hear color.

I ask you, Sidonius, according to your Lucretius: “Will the eyes find fault with the ears? Or the ears with touch? Or will touch argue with the taste of the mouth? Or the nostrils contend with the eyes?” I don’t think so. The power of each sense is separate and divine, as Baruchias and all Academic and Peripatetic philosophers affirm.

But what is the reason for this division? According to Epicurus: “The eye, and the other instruments, do not know the very nature of things.” What then? Hear the verse: “This reasoning of the mind must distinguish.” Just as color provides the visible form that fills an empty canvas, so too does the luminous form of truth in the mind provide the essential material for reason. It is this 'estimation' (the act of reflective thought) that uses this material to distinguish one thing from another.

I will recount the entire cause briefly. A sensible thing projects from itself a very subtle, incorporeal image. Because of the receptive nature of our senses, this image is easily apprehended. The sense immediately discerns a different, more eminent dignity in it, casts aside the present substance of the thing, and turns it into an 'idol' (a representation) retaining only the external trappings. Then, the imagination receives the effigy of this absent image. Finally, the faculty of fantasy estimates and judges through these appearances, sometimes truly, sometimes deceptively. This process I just described isn't just an abstract theory. You can see it happening in the natural world. Even animals, operating on pure instinct and sense-perception, can be fooled into creating 'idols' and making false judgments. This is why horses, for instance, can distinguish and recoil from masks, fleeing as if

from a real threat. Similarly, birds often mistake artificial scarecrows in gardens and fields for genuine dangers, becoming terrified as if foreseeing the traps set by men.

However, these mental images, however elevated, are still brutish. A worthier part of the mind, called reason, sifts and weighs them, running from one property to another. Through this process, it affirms: this is crystal, that is ice; it distinguishes gems, knowing electrum can be mixed with glass; it observes this to be chrysolite, that jasper, that amber. In actions and business, it judges one thing base, another honorable. Reason always investigates, scrutinizing the senses with unwearying diligence: first from the matter itself, then from the concept stripped from the thing's presence, concepts not received by any single sense, yet which cannot be known without the senses.

For example, when I look at Baruchias: a man of medium stature, long beard, thoughtful forehead, aquiline nose, cloaked, wearing the circular sign of his people. As Satyrus says: “Head down, staring at the ground, he mumbles under his breath, stewing in a bitter silence until he finally bursts out with words from his pursed lips.” From this, I divine he is a Hebrew (from the circular sign), a philosopher (from the cloak), and a Pythagorean or similar (from his Saturnine, contemplative air). He seems, from his people's custom, not very friendly, though literature reconciles us; he rejoices in secrecy, a sign of a reclusive nature, which can be praiseworthy.

The scrutiny of reason never ceases; it has an innate, diligent desire for seeking truth. All artisans pursue this in their arts. We naturally hate to be deceived and those who speak duplicitously. Men consider nothing more shameful than to be wrong with one exception: the man who is morally good and strong in virtue. When we debate matters of knowledge, I always argue that these virtuous individuals, along with infants just weaned from the breast, are the only true examples of

humanity. We are curious even with infants, asking what they see or feel, showing we have a natural love for discovering truth.

We should not be led to the madness of thinking that Nature, which has never acted wrongly elsewhere, has erred so childishly as to give us a hunger for truth in vain. You agree that the eyes were created to see the light, and you admit that they successfully do so. In the same way, we must conclude that our intelligent nature did not implant reason in our mortal souls without a purpose. It would not have subjected reason to such a powerful urge to seek the truth unless it had first known that the human soul was capable of grasping it. Nor would it have endowed this noble faculty with the ability to spring into action, achieve results, be put to practical use, and be directed toward its proper object, unless it intended for reason to be fully effective and powerful.

The truth for reason is like color for the eye, odor for the nostril, sound for the ear. Therefore, a most certain truth triumphs in this world, which so often shakes, complicates, and explicates our reason. It forms the unformed in wonderful ways, not by chance, but by its own original nature. Since these enticements are not in vain, we eventually embrace the truth.

Whoever truly comprehends that which is, whether by supernatural or divine assistance, has obtained knowledge of it. We shall call knowledge the true apprehension of a thing. This is why I stated at the outset that the terms of your debate require more careful consideration.

The name 'knowledge' is manifold, as are the things we know. Many philosophers, especially the Platonists, decree there are two natures: One that can be seen and touched, entirely alterable. Though it is the same, it is perceived by the soul according to what it is and is not, that is, mutable. This receptible power of the mutable thing in us I call opinionable reason. From this proceeds what you, Sidonius, contend is the knowledge of natural things. I agree this 'knowledge' will change as

the things themselves change. Call it knowledge or opinion, the matter is clear. In one word: of all things under heaven, there is not, in a human way, what we truly call knowledge, but rather opinion. And then they assert another, incorruptible, immutable nature, always existing, perceived not by sense but by the edge of the mind. These are the divine things.

Many call the former things 'daemonic' (worldly), hence Plato is called 'divine' and Aristotle 'daemonic' for their eminence in writing about these respective realms.

Concerning these supercelestial things, not exposed to any sense, which mortal, by any human virtue alone, without divine aid, could ever obtain even the smallest understanding of them? No one, by God, no one.

Therefore, the truth of inferior things is the object and nourishment of reason; of superior things, it is the object of the mind. However, in this vast world, no constant, total, and irrefragable knowledge of substances is held except by divine revelation. As Aristotle implies, divine things are not touched by sense, and worldly things escape sense at any moment. Hence, our knowledge of causes is deficient, our industry fragile, our prudence late, and death swift. What we often think is wisdom is error, whether it's based on the sight of celestial things or the suspicion of natural causes.

The Chaldean philosophers, and the prophet Elijah writing to Babylon, rebuke this: “This is what the prophet Elijah, that most noble figure, wrote in rebuking the Chaldean philosophers and the city of Babylon: "Your own wisdom and knowledge have deceived you. Now try to let your stargazers, your 'astrologers of the heavens' (or perhaps more accurately, your 'soothsayers of the sky,' for that is what they are: those who stare at the stars and chart the months), try to let them save you and tell you what the future holds. But see, you have found no answer in this great

multitude of your advisers. Each one is lost, going their own way." This criticism encompasses both those who search into the causes of inferior things and those who care for celestial influxes; both are said to be ignorant.

Therefore, whether we are wise about eternal things (wisdom), knowledgeable about perpetual things, or cognize momentary things, the right faith is superior. Through it, the intellectual agent (pure, lucid, placed at the summit of the human soul) shining in divine minds, beholds all things ordained by reason as in a mirror of eternity. This can be called divine opinion or knowledge. For every intellective power, how much more certain and efficacious it is for contemplating and acting!

If permitted to compare: just as the soul becomes one with sensibles through sense and with intelligibles through intellect, so also, through faith, our mind becomes one with the supernal intelligences and joined with God, in whom all the causes of things shine forth more eminently than in their effects. The first cause is more intimate to things than secondary causes. It contains them, as a spring contains streams, or rather, as the immense sea contains all waves.

When I contemplate the universe, reflecting on how Agamemnon in Homer calls God the one who 'holds the universe,' granting Him the greatest power, and how Orpheus names Him as the origin and sustaining force of all things from beginning to end, a fundamental pattern of existence becomes clear to me. I see a great chain of connection, where each level of being communicates with the next through a shared property: Heaven with Fire through heat, Fire with Air through heat, Air with Water through moisture, Water with Earth through cold, and Earth with Fire through dryness. This same pattern extends to higher realms: God communicates with a Divine Intelligence (or Daemon, meaning a 'knowing' spirit) through immortality, the Daemon with Humanity through affection, Humanity with Beasts through sensation, and Beasts with Plants through a shared animating soul that gives them life.

Yet the brute is separated from man by reason, man from daemon by innate wisdom. But man differs from man most importantly by faith. So, as the ignorant differs from the wise through reason, the wise differs from the prophet through faith, and the prophet from the daemon through his mortal condition.

This explains why God placed humanity at the very center of Paradise. Now, 'Paradise' is a garden of delights, and all adornment is a form of delight. In fact, the very world takes its name from this concept of adornment, for in Greek it is called Kosmos. We see a parallel in civil law, where a woman's collection of ornaments is called her mundus muliebris. Thus, God positioned humanity at the heart of the universe, as a being that shares a nature with both the realms above and below. Our divine vocation is to direct faith upward toward the celestial and to apply reason downward toward the earthly. Among mortals, we act like gods through our faith; among the celestial beings, we stand as humans through our reason. We excel over all other creatures through our wisdom—surpassed only by divinity itself, yet surpassing the limited vision of mere physical nature. This is the very truth we learn from King David, who, speaking of humanity to the highest and greatest God, declared: "You have made him a little less than the divine beings," that is, a little less than God. So, my feeling on our contention is this: there is eternal truth, of which the mind is the receptacle; and mutable truth, contained in the reason. Knowledge of the former is wisdom; of the latter, right opinion. All things are uncertain unless strengthened by divine faith.

There is one further, rather feeble objection we must address, an argument popularized by Epicurus. I say this with all due respect to his followers. I believe our friend Sidonius is familiar enough with it to recount it, though his own superior learning and intellectual gravity prevent him from endorsing it. This argument seeks to make us doubt, posing the question: Would God be bothered by the annoyance of bestowing blessings on mortals? Or does He actually desire to be

petitioned by our prayers? Epicurus, who valued idleness above all else and even defined the highest good as a state of untroubled leisure, went so far as to claim that any divine involvement in the world would be a burdensome annoyance. But this is absurd! By this logic, would we believe the sun grows weary and its light fails because it has shone for too long? Would we think the very sky is exhausted by its constant, life-giving influence on the world below?

So indeed Ulysses in Homer harangues the army: “We Achaeans cannot all rule here. For the rule of many is not good; let there be one prince, one king.” Otherwise, where would the innumerable atoms of the Epicurean kingdom be governing? If they rule by reason, they are not simple, indivisible bodies. If beyond reason, they would act imprudently, which nature and the very name of the world abhors.

Therefore, the Supreme Being must be absolutely one, and to be one is to be perfectly simple and non-composite. If He were composed of parts, He would be multiple, not one. This simple, unified nature means He contains no internal conflict, no weariness, no disturbance, and no capacity for annoyance. A being of parts could become fragmented and changeable, potentially for the worse, a notion utterly incompatible with perfect unity and the highest goodness. Furthermore, His actions are a perfect reflection of His nature. That which acts according to its own essence (that is, in a manner that is clement, beneficent, merciful, and expresses every other quality of goodness) both demonstrates and enhances its true character. Thus, God, being the One, is inherently clement. He is "God" when we call upon Him in prayer, and "Clement" when He answers those prayers according to our vows.

But what could be more insane than to imagine that our humble prayers could possibly disturb the serene and ceaseless activity of God? His greatest dignity is to be sought; His profound tranquility

is to bestow gifts. He Himself invites us to ask, as the Son of God, who is God Himself, taught us: “No one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws them in.”

Yet your own Lucretius, Sidonius (and I use your name here with respect, even in so sacred a discussion) and his master Epicurus, dare to attribute to God a sentiment that would be considered disgraceful even among good men: the notion that He is annoyed by the pleas of His friends. What, after all, is the very essence of prayer, if not a mortal's declaration of friendship with God? And what gives power to our supplications, if not mutual love? This is the timeless truth that Homer, that most philosophical of poets, captures when he writes: “Chryses; Apollo himself heard his prayer, for the priest was dearly loved by him.” From these brief points, which I have laid out as best my limited eloquence allows, I believe it is clear what constitutes a proper human response to divinity. For now, it is not my purpose to debate whether the same being can be both God and man, whether born from God or descended from mortals.

The apostate Emperor Julian, in his book Against the Galileans, recorded the following account of Aesculapius: "Jupiter generated Aesculapius from his own divine intellect, and destined him for earth via the life-giving power of the sun. Securing a passage from heaven to earth, he appeared consistently in human form in the region of Epidaurus." Establishing a cult there, he extended his healing power across the entire world. His influence spread to Pergamum, then through Ionia to Tarentum, and later to Rome. From there, it reached Cos, Aegae, and other sites by both sea and land, wherever he journeyed to heal mental afflictions and cure physical diseases. Julian claims to have personally witnessed these manifestations of his power.

Nor is it my purpose here to delve into the endless debate about the immortal gods and how they supposedly walked the earth and interacted with mortals. We all know the stories: Apollo chasing Daphne, serving Admetus in Thessaly, appearing to Laomedon in Phrygia, or feasting with the

poor peasants Philemon and Baucis in human disguise. As Ovid wrote of Jupiter in a similar tale: "...Jupiter in mortal form, with Mercury, the son of Atlas, laying aside his wings." In fact, Ovid's entire Metamorphoses is little more than a catalogue of gods consorting with humans, or, more ridiculously, being transformed into beasts, metals, stones, and other soulless objects. This isn't mere interaction; it's a complete loss of divine identity. Given this, the philosopher Epicurus, who held a sublime and unchanging concept of divinity, should be considered more admirable than these poetic fictions. For the poets sing that Jupiter, the king of the gods, was transformed into every conceivable thing—even the most base. He became a shower of gold, then a Swan; he was a Bull, then an Eagle, and even a stone called Abaddir. In this, he was more changeable than the sea-god Proteus himself.

But we say that the society of man with God, or the communication of God with man, is through love, which faith begot and hope nourished. God is love; man is hope; the bond of both is faith. Divinity is joined to mind, mind to intellect, intellect to intention, intention to image, image to sensation, sensation to the senses, the senses to things. The superior virtue flows through all into the inferiors according to each one's capacity.

It often happens that I look directly at something, yet later have no memory of seeing it, because my imagination was captivated by something else entirely.So, what is this faculty within me that feels troubled, this nagging suspicion that I did see something? It is the intellect, which had already begun to rationally process the mental image provided by the imagination.However, the intellect itself is not immune to error unless it is illuminated by the higher Mind. And this higher Mind cannot provide light to the intellect unless God is the source of that light.Since God possesses free will (for without it, He would be less free than a human), He, according to His own measure,

chooses to pour more or less of this illuminating light into the Mind. It is this divine light that nourishes and enlivens all our other human faculties.

Therefore, although there is no proportion of man towards God (God is infinite, man finite), these two are not *most* diverse, as you said. They are not the same, but they can be joined by an ineffable bond, so that one and the same must be thought to be both human God and divine man.

Most learned men, I now speak with you frankly, as if in a philosophical gymnasium, debating not the mysteries of secret faith but the principles of common philosophy. Consider the nature of Unity. It has no beginning or end and is therefore infinite in its being, power, and activity. Although it is not itself a number (as number implies a collection of parts), it is the source from which all numbers flow and the principle with which all numbers interact. This varying interaction of Unity with numbers brings about a corresponding variation in the very substance of things. Thus, Unity, like a supreme sovereign, governs the entire kingdom of number. It humbles one and exalts another. As Heliodorus says, “This one it easily raises up, and the same easily brings low the lofty.” For this divine Unity emanates from its own boundless, immanent nature. As the infinite, it is the ultimate measure and boundary of all things. It is like the primordial triangle from which all numerical sums are generated, present and active at the very foundation of all creation.

From this initial unity, a second level of reality emanates, a simple, indivisible sphere, inherently aligned with the principle of the 'odd' (symbolizing unity and spirit), yet it presents the first appearance of a composite nature, being formed from the primordial seeds of all things, containing both 'even' and 'odd.' Then, in a third stage, this power extends over the world of solid bodies. It permeates all sensible things through the cyclical patterns of 'otherness' and works tirelessly within the structure of the perfect 'decenary pyramid'…the number ten, which encompasses all of creation. Finally, the divine unity itself comes to dwell at the wondrous center of every number.

Through a kind of circular motion of indivisible singularity, it seeks to draw all things back to itself in a magnificent act of reflection. This is why this central point shares a symbolic character with the second, higher emanation. This entire hierarchical order, from the highest unity to the lowest body occupying the middle, was established by the unique design of the universe's architecture. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the One does not refuse to communicate with individual created things. This divine connection is most clearly seen in the fact that God converses with the human soul. And the most powerful proof of this conversation is our own capacity to perform wonders that transcend our human nature.

Thus, we mortals are beings of a dual nature: we are rooted in the natural world, yet we can also command powers that transcend it. Through a single word, the very 'wonder-working word' that Peligimus dared to describe to us yesterday, we can produce monsters, portents, and miracles, which are the very signatures of divine power.

Sidonius said: Titus Capnion, proceed. For I desire to know where you are going. So may God love me, I have never heard anything more divine.

Capnion: Namely, that there are in us words of such power, so esoteric, which we consider the easiest and most subtle of human arts, that they can bring about so many wonders that are so arduous, subtle, and bold as far as it pleases our mind. We read about Medea, who said, “Words... making peaceful forms, which disturb the troubled sea, which stop the rushing rivers.” For what cannot songs do? The sorceress in Ovid boasts:

“With a chant I shake the fixed shores, I drive away and draw the clouds and winds, I break the viper's jaws with words and charm, and I loosen the living rocks and the oaks torn from their own

earth, and I move the woods and make the mountains tremble, and the earth to groan, and the shades to exit from the tombs. You also, moon, I draw."

Sidonius: This is precisely why, Baruchias, we must entreat Capnion and offer him whatever it takes so that he will finally reveal to us the nature of this 'word' by which he claims such miracles can be performed.

Baruchias responded: I agree with you. And certainly, a dispute over such secrets would be a worthy pursuit for so great a philosopher. It is true that my people, the Hebrews, were once deeply curious about this very aspect of religion, as our ancient esoteric books attest. However, I must speak frankly: I do not believe there is a single Hebrew in this day and age who is still attended by such power of words. We now murmur our prayers and practice our religion to no visible effect, just as the oracles at Delphi have fallen silent and the Pythian priestess was rightly exposed by Philip as a fraud. Let no charlatan be found who, for the sake of profit, promises such divine responses to those foolish enough to be deceived.

I speak first of other nations, then my own. For the Phrygian augur will give his prophecies to the rich, and for a pittance of bronze, he'll sell you any omen you desire. Such is the detestable greed for gold, ever-honored among wicked men, that they do not hesitate—driven by pure avarice—to defile all that is sacred and secular alike with their crimes.

Concerning your people, Capnion, certain priests boast they are the purest and full of divinity. I would dare object to nothing, lest you believe I attempt to neglect our sect's friendship. For Terence's adage stands out: "Truth begets hatred." If I did not fear that, I would bring into the midst how they profane all sacred things for a price, from the highest to the lowest. Everything is for sale. They preach prodigies and miracles to the people so they may be laden with gifts and so that

their houses overflow with gold. As Isaiah says: “Their ears they open with words, so that they may enrich their houses with gold.” It's all the same: one boasts of magical chants, another of Thessalian philtres, and yet others of Jewish formulas; they all have something to sell.

Therefore, once this avarice is rooted out, I believe no one will remain who would dare to promise miracles through words and signs, save for some demented sorceress. Such a figure might claim to possess a divine power and seek believers among the gullible, boasting of impossible feats: that she can tear down the heavens, suspend the earth in space, turn fountains to stone, melt mountains, summon spirits, inflame the gods, extinguish the stars, or light up the underworld. But this is merely the raving of a mad old woman. When such impostors are finally caught and put to the test, their fraud is exposed. And this is no minor crime; by the laws of Rome, and even by the more ancient laws of our Hebrew people, this deception is punishable by death.

Slightly annoyed by these words, Capnion nevertheless responded moderately and lovingly to Baruchias: Where are you leading your speech? Do you dare to persuade us that, unless there is fraud, stupendous things are not often done by men, things not born in time but arising suddenly, not propagated but instantaneous, which no one comprehended before or even hoped for? These things which are called miracles. Do you attribute them to chance?

It is utterly unthinkable that this divine and venerable power could be easily acquired for money. In fact, even those who are most given to avarice are denied this sacred liberality. Consider the poets: in Hesiod, which of the gods are actually named as 'givers of riches'? The heavenly powers rarely bestow wealth in this way, and one certainly should not seek it from the infernal powers. Therefore, those who try to buy and sell divine gifts are acting with a thoroughly corrupted conscience, avoiding true piety because of the sheer foulness of their greed. The philosopher Theognis upholds this sound, ancient principle with his testimony: “I do not love wealth, nor do I

seek it; my aim has been to live modestly and avoid wickedness." Your Solomon, endowed with no less wisdom, expressed the same sentiment: "Want and riches do not give me; allow me to take my daily bread." Or, as it's commonly said: "Do not give me beggary and riches; provide only what I need."

However, the practices of your Jewish school, specifically the practice of what you call the obsequious 'words of miracle-making' have, believe me, done great harm to their own cause. This is especially true among the very people where this art was once held in the highest esteem. In fact, my own ancestors were so captivated by this philosophy that they traveled to that region, leaving behind the sweet society of friends and fellow citizens and abandoning their native homes. They were driven not merely by wanderlust, but by a quest that felt like a perpetual exile.

I am aware that some scholars dispute this, claiming that thinkers like Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato were influenced only by the Egyptian prophets of Memphis, and not by the Jews. The early Christian writer Lactantius counted himself among these skeptics in the fourth volume of his Divine Institutes, though he seems to have held this view alone. However, by tracing the clear influence of Mosaic thought in the writings of these Greek philosophers, I am compelled to disagree. The evidence forces me to conclude that they did not bypass Syria, nor even the Chaldean schools of the Indians. We know that during this very period (around the 56th Olympiad, the time of Thales), Hebrew scriptures were held in such high esteem among the Babylonians that they commissioned a translation of them from Hebrew into the Chaldean language. This historical fact demonstrates the reach and prestige of Jewish wisdom in the exact centers of learning those Greek philosophers were known to visit. Who, inflamed with a desire for truth, would leave home to seek the unknown, yet ignore these most ancient monuments? Who would doubt that these men, present

in Egypt, also accessed Judea? Having tasted the rivulets, they would drink from the fountain, looking into the rites of the Nabataeans and imbibing the purity of divinity.

An oracle, famous in that age and sung throughout the land, confirms this: “The Chaldeans alone are wise; the Hebrews also are wise, who care for the people and the king God.” Furthermore, the distance between Egyptians and Jews is small, and you often find their peoples mixed in places like Sebaste (Samaria), Philadelphia, and Hierachonte in Galilee. This matter is not obscure to you, Sidonius, who was born not far from there.

Sidonius said: You speak truly. Judea, Egypt, Arabia, and Babylon are contiguous regions. It seems probable to me that those philosophers reached Palestine and Hebrew wisdom, as I have ascertained they often transferred not only the matters but almost the words of that people into their books. But proceed, Capnion.

Capnion: Very well, I will speak plainly about the Jews. Let us take Plato as a certain example—a philosopher I myself turn to for inspiration, often reading him after countless duties and public disturbances. And, good God, how deeply that man drank from the Hebrew wellspring, often borrowing word for word! If you wish to explore this further, you need only read that most righteous philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, a man you have doubtless read, a martyr of faith and of the highest integrity, though perhaps that makes him suspect in your eyes. I know he agrees with me, though he does so implicitly rather than by direct statement.

But I return to my main point: that salutary, miraculous power of words which has abandoned your tradition has chosen ours. It accompanies us and responds to our command. This power was divinely given and bestowed, not devised by human planning. It is the mark of a perfected religion, and it does not shift randomly, but only through sincere devotion and disciplined practice. But you

have abandoned the legitimate rites. That is why your prayers are empty murmurs and your invocations of God are in vain. You do not worship Him as He commanded, but instead, with blasphemous innovations, you flatter your own inventions. Furthermore, you harbor an undying hatred for us, who worship God correctly, a hatred that God Himself utterly rejects, for He desires to dwell in minds that are at peace.

Nor could our friend Sidonius ever easily agree with a credulous race of visionaries. After all, you come from a lineage that has always been stubbornly rational, since you are of a patrician stock resistant to the fancies of the common mystic. Given this, I hold little hope of persuading you. Yet, perhaps the vast learning in your illustrious mind, your profound studies, your immense erudition, and, above all, your powerful love of knowledge might yet accomplish what I cannot.

Sidonius and Baruchias (pleading with Capnion): Capnion, we implore you: do not lose hope or abandon us! The miraculous power of words is our only recourse, since it is a power that transcends all ordinary knowledge. It is the fundamental tool of instruction, just as a schoolmaster uses his rod to command a classroom.

Capnion (responding, first to Baruchias): Baruchias, I am well aware that your method for building theological systems is entirely different from that of mathematicians and physicists.

Capnion (continuing his explanation): Those scientists find it most effective to begin by calculating and debating amongst themselves, arguing a question from both sides. Then, through established axioms and principles, which you cannot easily refute, they use logical combination to force a conclusion, compelling you to accept their result.

But in divine matters, the opposite is true: silence is preferred, excessive talk is rejected, and human syllogisms are mocked. For divinity has no prior principle; nothing precedes it. Therefore,

whatever divine truth is revealed must be assented to immediately, based on a faith that is far more certain than any scientific proof.

Sidonius (interjecting): And what that truth is, we have already learned from you before. So now, Capnion, we ask you to resume your excellent discourse. Teach us the specific words by which we can perform wonders. On behalf of our fellowship, I pledge that we will carry out whatever is required.

Capnion: I know you are both good and learned men. I fear not that sacrilege might be feared from you, nor do I fear from you that the highest divinity would be injured by perverse worship. Both of you know that is a nefarious thing for philosophers. But I accept willingly. I will prescribe rules which you will observe without offense.

Baruchias, depart from the Talmud.

And you, Sidonius, depart from Epicurus and Lucretius.

Be clean, be mine.

Hold the one God as the effector of all things, the other powers as ministers.

Direct your vows and prayers to the first; to the inferiors, hymns.

If you pray to a lesser being, such as a saint or an angel, do not treat it as an independent source of power. Remember that any power they have is only delegated by the One God, and your devotion must not be diverted from its true source.

Let angels be for us intermediaries to God; towards them, let there be devoted, pure, holy obedience, reverence, and trembling.

The sacred observances you are about to hear are pure for the worthy, but profane for the profane.

I have judged that these edicts should be prescribed clearly, so you can ponder them and decide whether to accept or reject them. On no other condition will I admit you into the secret academy of the sacred names. When you willingly assent to these laws, I hope you will most easily reach what you desire.

Then Sidonius: Thus far, I find your decrees entirely acceptable. I doubt even Baruchias finds them too harsh, despite the law you've set concerning the Talmud. I must confess, when I once read the Talmud, its contents seemed to me a collection of superstitious factions and the deluded ambitions of a maddened tradition certainly not to be followed, especially in matters of divinity. For it appears to distort the sacred rites of other nations, perverting them into objects of hatred and pretexts for plunder, rather than interpreting them as a path to the world's salvation. I think, however, Baruchias will easily depart from it, remembering the Talmud was written by men like us, who soaked their inventions with pleasure, like the commentaries of scholiasts, which one can desert with impunity. Just as I also am a deserter of Lucretius and Epicurus, for I never swore an oath to them. The remaining decrees are golden and of golden profession. Wherefore, I will refute nothing.

But I, to speak for myself, why should I not undergo what philosophy once persuaded me as a boy? For through so many ages, the whole sect of Sardanapalus [Epicureanism] with its authors Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius has been frequently exploded by good and illustrious men. Why should I doubt your other laws, which I learned before from many men, especially from magical instructors?

Regarding purification: Regarding the ritual bath: I once lived among the most wise men of India, the Brahmins, and adopted their practice of washing, making it part of my daily routine over a long period. Each day, I would go with them to a fountain (not unlike the famous Dirce in Boeotia) where we would remove our garments and wash. We began by anointing our heads with drops of

oil and appropriate perfumes. Once they judged us sufficiently purified, we would proceed around midday to the sacred altars in their courtyard. There, we were dressed in white linen robes and white mitres, wearing iron rings on our fingers and carrying staffs in our hands.This medicinal purification of both body and soul, they believed, greatly assisted in achieving mental purity. These practices were established by the ancient Vardanes, who was, among the Indians, the fourth successor from Hiarchas.

Likewise, among the Gymnosophists, I was admitted only after washing with cold water three times by day and twice by night before entering the sacred places. It was proper to wear a freshly washed linen garment, for they consider wool profane, as the excrement of a filthy beast.

We also read in Heliodorus that this precept is observed by divine men: “No one at dawn should pour libations to Jove with unwashed hands... He does not wish to hear such prayers.” And in another poem: “The gods become angry with him who, with unclean hands, meets them.” Thus Telemachus, about to supplicate Pallas, washed his hands in the sea. Homer was not ignorant of this, making Thetis, mother of Achilles, wash in the sea-waves before supplicating Jove.

You have presented us with a third law, and its truth is confirmed by the clearest and most ancient authorities. Consider Sophocles, who states in an iambic distich, which I will translate as best I can: “In truth, there is only one God: Who made the heavens and this spacious earth.” Euripides identifies this same being as Jove. Orpheus, in his hymns, sings that all creation proceeded from this god's head into the light, and praises him as the begetter of all things, the single source who is both the beginning and the end.

This established, the conclusion that follows is clear: all other celestial powers are to be regarded not as equals, but as his ministers. You will find this very principle taught in Homer's songs. In the

eighth book of the Iliad, during the assembly of the gods, Zeus makes a speech brimming with splendor and majesty, declaring himself the supreme ruler of all things. He states that the other gods are his inferiors and must do nothing without his nod; anyone who disobeys will be cast into Tartarus. This makes it abundantly clear how much more powerful Zeus is than all other gods and men. From this a fourth law is logically drawn, as if by a dialectical method: If the First God is the one who dispenses all things, then it is futile to seek help from lesser powers by prayer or vow. This is exemplified in the Odyssey by Princess Nausicaa, who says: “Zeus himself dispenses all things to men from on high, to the noble and the lowly alike, to each as he wishes.” This is also why Achilles, when wronged by King Agamemnon, does not petition a lesser deity for revenge. Instead, he stretches his hands to the sky and prays to the highest power: “But you, if you have any power, protect me. Go as a suppliant to Olympus, implore Zeus.”

For this being is the Lord and Father of the universe. As Menander writes: “We shall be worthy of the highest honor only from Him who alone is the author and possessor of all honors.” This truth is mirrored by a natural instinct within us: when we find a clear, pristine spring, we instinctively refrain from muddying it. In the same way, why would we ignore the supreme heavenly beings, who are established by a higher order, and instead seek aid from a lesser power than Jove? Rather, we should follow the admonition of Theognis: “When a courageous man is in dire straits, it is then that he should call upon the heavenly gods to deliver him.”

Let us therefore accept the assistance of the higher beings as we would from friends. Let us welcome the services of demigods and the guidance of household gods and wise men, for they can aid us through counsel and comfort. Through their learning, their warnings, and their steadfast inspiration, we can shape our minds to comprehend divine matters. For these divinities possess deeper understanding than we do; they know us and our circumstances perfectly. Therefore, they

can far more accurately and fittingly align our affairs with the immutable decree of the Supreme God just as rays of light interact with physical objects to direct their course. Through this mediation, future blessings or calamities are steered toward us. Thus, depending on whether the gods are favorable or displeased, we either avoid one fate or endure another. This is the origin of the ancient belief held by our forefathers: that Jove was the supreme majesty because he imposed the fates upon mortals. It is a weak and unworthy mentality, a kind of spiritual lethargy, to think like this, like the short-sighted woman in Homer's twentieth book who tells Ulysses: "Whatever fate the immortals have spun for mortals who dwell on the earth, that is how it must be."

Thus Socrates was led by divine admonition. Thus Numa by Aegeria. Thus there was no Pythagorean who did not feel the gods. To those who are good, as portions of the first good, reverence and honor are due. Honor is the reward of virtue. The greater are our lords and rulers, excelling us in reason and intellect; they are called intelligences.

The following laws are also proven by custom. Sophocles says in *Orestes*: "Obedience is due to the more excellent." And in *Ajax*: "For whom fear urges and simulacra terrify, believe that one soon to have salvation."

Wherefore, Capnion, it will be very easy for me to offer consent to your useful law, a cause accepted by so many thousands of learned and good men.

Then Baruchias: Sidonius, some of the greater age have also strayed. You should not concede all things to antiquity without reason distinguishing them as true. I would not wish to distrust these laws or your arguments deceitfully. I myself am compelled by the authority of divine revelation alone. Cicero establishes, through Cotta the pontiff, that in religion we ought to believe our

ancestors without reason given; Plato calls them the sons of the gods who would have known their parents best. Therefore, the highest faith is to be offered.

But the vanity of the vulgar has often mixed falsehoods with the true, which philosophers could scarcely escape without danger. Diagoras was accused for thinking differently about the gods and avoided death by flight. Anaxagoras was led to punishment at Athens, and Socrates was killed by poison. Our wise men, the prophets, often underwent death for the sake of God at the hands of kings or the people.

We remember that Jeroboam raised his hand against a man of God, a hand which withered; Elijah was torn apart; Jeremiah was stoned in Egypt; Ezekiel was killed in Chaldea; Daniel was condemned to beasts; Amos was slain; Micah was given to a precipice; Zechariah was slaughtered at the altar—all for thinking more praiseworthily than the unlearned plebs.

Therefore, you added justly: “To learned and likewise good men.” But nothing now presses me more than to lack glory and good fame among my own, the most literate man of the Talmud. But since it is so, Capnion, let custom be observed; I will renounce the Talmud, in which from childhood I began to learn, and in which the highest pleasure always persisted. I hope this will be pleasing to God: that I should set aside a study most dear to my heart, for a higher purpose. I easily lack all other things, provided that the notice of so holy a wonder of names does not pass me by, that word you recalled, by which we mortals, constituted in nature, might dominate above nature and produce miracles, the insignia of divinity.

Come, Capnion, that we may not be ignorant of this word. My fellow tribesmen conceal many wonder-working words in secret, which I have read much but never felt the effects of, perhaps because I did not observe the proper method of uttering them or perhaps I believed falsehoods.

Sidonius said: Ah, but here's the real catch: the true power lies in Hebrew. That is what actually works. I confess, I once devoted as much energy to the writings of certain charlatans on the magical arts, authors utterly unworthy of the paper they were printed on. I delved into their books expecting to find wondrous secrets, akin to the legendary operations of Zoroaster, Orontes, Zamolxis, Epimenides, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Hostanes, Empedocles, and even the famed Thessalian spells of the 'immortal Jew.' I carefully studied the works of Damigeron, Apollonius, and John of Dardania. But do you want to know what I found? By the gods, it's nothing more than the perfect example of Horace's saying: “The mountains labored, and gave birth to a ridiculous mouse.”

The booksellers hang impressive titles on the fronts of their volumes to attract buyers. One day they fraudulently claim a book is the work of Enoch, who ancient tradition says predated all other patriarchs. The next day, they assert another is by Solomon, a lie that easily deceives the uneducated. They support this deception with a clever but false interpretation of Josephus. In his Antiquities of the Jews (Book 8), Josephus indeed writes that Solomon invented the art of repelling demons for human benefit and composed incantations against diseases, even providing a specific conjuration method and an experiment he claims to have witnessed himself. Furthermore, the Hebrew scriptures confirm that Solomon was renowned for his wisdom, holding discourses on everything from the great cedar of Lebanon to the lowly hyssop, and on animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. The forgers disingenuously present this vast knowledge of nature as evidence that Solomon possessed a 'natural magic'—a powerful, innate understanding of the hidden properties of the natural world, which they pretend to reveal in their spurious books.

However, a more critical examination quickly exposes the fraudulent cunning of these unscrupulous publishers. The books themselves, long since exposed as forgeries in our time, betray their true age to anyone who analyzes their language, their sentence structure, and the very style

of their script. They inserted things from prior authors, yet by the rudeness of letters they observe nothing instructed. Not the words in numbers, nor the figures. They ignore that the Egyptians used a double character, one for profane, one for sacred. The Chaldean and Hebrew languages, which they attest as necessary for magical work, we write with a similar image of characters.

This is precisely why all those renowned masters (the Alberts, the Roberts, the Bacons, the Abanos, the authors of the Picatrix, and the entire council of learned men) failed to properly grasp and transmit this art. Their fundamental shortcoming was an ignorance of the necessary languages. Consequently, the scribes who copied their manuscripts, working from already flawed translations, inevitably introduced more errors. With such corrupted texts, their disciples could learn very little, and in the end, they could achieve practically nothing.

Sidonius concluded: I return, then, to my agreement with Baruchias. While I have certainly read many of these so-called 'secret' texts, I have never perceived any tangible results from them. This was likely because I lacked a qualified master whose skill and genius is essential for such operations to succeed. So please, I ask you once more, do not hesitate to explain it to us.

And Capnion: It is now evening, and that time is imminent in which such a great and divine matter cannot be completed. This place is unsuited for secret ceremonies, so profane for sacred rites. I judge it better to defer the whole matter to tomorrow, when we can meet in my suburban villa, situated in the light.

In the meantime, remember this of the night: what among differing decrees is to be felt by all most of all, and to be believed most constantly. For right faith alone is the gate of miracles. If you neglect it, you cannot penetrate the oracular assemblies.

Then Sidonius: The statute and time and place are very pleasing. But you, take care to doubt nothing of our faith. I believe, led by your probity and singular doctrine, whatever you will command.

Baruchias said: Then I, too, will believe as you do, provided your reasoning holds. If I refused, our friend Sidonius would surely recite to me the songs of the ancient Linus, whose precepts teach that all things should be believed. For nothing is incredible to God, for whom all things are easy; nothing is impossible. The verses of Linus, as you know, insist upon this. But we also find this truth in Homer. I am reminded of the scene where the goddess Pallas appears to Achilles, comforting him with these words: “I have come to ease your sorrow, provided you trust me.”

I will willingly add: the history of Daniel, written in Chaldean. By this faith, that holy man, having believed, escaped the lions unharmed. Thus the truth of speech has it. Therefore I also will believe equally with Sidonius, whatever you will command.

Then Capnion produced a small tablet and held it out to them and said: "Things are progressing favorably. Take these home with you and study them. They contain a concise catalogue of the essential tenets of the true faith, which I first declare we must all accept. This will ensure that when we reconvene, our meeting will be fruitful and not a waste of time. Farewell."

"And you, Capnion, farewell happily," both responded, departing.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK OF JOHANNES REUCHLIN OF PFORZHEIM

BOOK II

THE PREFACE OF JOHANNES REUCHLIN TO THE SECOND BOOK

The sacred day has been joyfully concluded. I now ask for your patience as I recount how the philosophers, rising before dawn, assembled and spent the entire day talking about the wonder-working word. Yesterday, Sidonius led the debate. Today, Baruchias will preside. You will now learn many more doctrines drawn from the Chaldean and Hebrew books.

Sidonius began: I am here, Capnion, so early I've practically ambushed you at daybreak! And look, here arrives Baruchias as well, not walking but practically running, for fear of missing a single word you say. Would I even need to spur him on? Who could be more eager? You there, Baruchias!

And Baruchias, almost breathless, said: Ah, Capnion, you're here, and you, Sidonius, only a moment behind me...though in my opinion, still far too early! Has the night's chill even lifted? Has the rotating sky dispelled the shadows? But this place is truly fitting for a philosopher and for the remarkable Capnion. Unlike the customs of your people, or rather, our people now, since you've made us your own, it contains no idols, nor any images, unless something lies concealed in the inner sanctum or upon the ceremonial plaques. But no, look there: it is the cross itself that presides here.

Then Sidonius: Enough, Baruchias. Let's not dwell on these things. You were the one who arrived after me, I was here first. Now, Capnion, instruct us about this 'wonder-working word.' Tell us if it is a single name, or many. The grammatical details matter little to us, so long as it is the very word you described. You know, the one that allows us, though rooted in nature, to act above nature and perform miracles. We need to know: does this word work through prediction, as in divination, or does it actively create effects? We mean those marvelous works whose natural cause remains hidden, astounding even the most learned men. These marvels include the mythical Hermaphrodites and Androgynes of old, and the Phoenix, that bird of which the poets sing, "All Egypt gathers for such a wonder, and a crowd of birds comes, saluting and rejoicing." Herodotus

himself confessed that he awaited its appearance for many years, yet never saw it except in a painting. Even the birth of five children at once belongs to this category, a natural event so rare it was considered a monstrous prodigy.

Furthermore, if nature itself occasionally produces prodigies, such as the chameleon's liver described by Democritus, which when dried on high rooftops was said to attract rain and thunder, or the famous wooden dove built by Archytas of Tarentum that could fly, a device we have both seen and understand how to build, then our task is to create similar marvels. These can arise either from nature's own offerings or from our own efforts that harness natural principles, the logic of which is easily grasped even by uneducated artisans and common people. But I have no interest in learning such commonplace tricks from you. They are so widespread that they are debated in taverns and on street corners, and have become part of the daily chatter of sophists. Nor am I seeking the wondrous machines promised by astrologers, whether through crafting talismanic images or engraving rings to predict the future, control fortune, or tap into the obscure energies of lower beings. These practices are so unreliable and self-contradictory that they amount to nothing; their own proponents cannot agree, and the immense, futile labor required would only be justified if it served a truly healing art like medicine. I would rather state the simple truth than employ the most elaborate deceptions. My aim is to expose the true nature of this so-called art, this ‘creative faculty’ of the mind, for what it is: an object of derision.

The most compelling evidence of truth is internal consistency; the hallmark of falsehood, by contrast, is contradiction and discord. So tell me, what in this so-called ‘art’, which its practitioners claim is constant, firm, and sincere, can you actually trust? I am not speaking about measuring the stars themselves, a science which mathematicians and direct observation confirm is reliable. I am speaking of the interpretations and judgments derived from those measurements. The entire

practice of astrological prediction is a slippery path of foolish speculation. This is especially true when it tries to foretell things that have no physical connection to the stars, matters like personal character, worldly events, financial gain, or political power. This is the very point your own sage, Moses, intimates when he says, “See, they differ among themselves.” The astrologers cannot even agree with one another.

For Abumalar, that preceptor of astrology, says: “Certain astrologers thought that the planets signify only universal things, like elements and natural species; but about singulars and individual actions, like to move or to be quiet, they demonstrate nothing deeper. Others think the stars bring forth only necessary things: that fire is hot, water cold, but not contingent things: as whether a man speaks or is silent. Others opine that the planets portend only the changes of times. The later astrologers follow the ancients and add nothing, saying it would be impossible for the wisest astronomers to find anything of the science of judgments.”

And yet, these astrologers boldly promote a discipline that makes empty promises. They claim it can reveal the most minute details of human thought and can predict and even alter the entire course of nature. They are not deterred in the least by the warning of Ptolemy himself, who admitted that such prediction is mostly deceptive. Nothing turns them from their slippery, baseless principles, principles which are interpreted differently by every authority, be it the ancients, Ptolemy, the Flamonian school, or Hermes Trismegistus. They are undaunted by the infinite chain of secondary causes that can affect a single event. They are unfazed by the immense distance of the stars from us, and the countless intervening influences. They ignore the utterly chaotic and incomprehensible multitude of stars, including those they have never even observed, and new stars that appear which they admit they've never seen before. By their own logic, they would have to

account for the influence of even a tiny star like Sirius, which adds barely a fraction of heat to what is already received from the six planets.

Furthermore, I am not asking you to explain the mechanics of how magic supposedly performs miracles. I have already wasted considerable time on that very pursuit, and I do not regret it for one reason: my experience allows me to dissuade others from paying such a terrible price for this knowledge. Consider the cost: you can spend your entire life in this cunning trade, and in the end, what you wrest from it is not truth, but mere illusion, all while risking your very life. This is not just a theory. Take the Englishman Robert, who died a wretched death among the Swiss. Or another, whose name I will not mention, who was captured and suffered an even more miserable fate. I have heard from reliable sources of other brilliant men in this art who met similarly dreadful ends. It seems the powers of darkness routinely reward their followers with this kind of 'honor', a path leading to ruin.

However, suppose there are those who believe they practice a form of magic that avoids dark bindings and evil conjurations, relying instead on the quiet assistance of a good spirit. Even if this were true for them, their system is so hopelessly convoluted that they must first master every single astrological rule I just refuted, down to the most minute detail, along with all the prescribed rituals of their tradition. The burden this places on human intellect is intolerable, not to say utterly impossible. Consider the sheer volume of texts: the books on this subject alone are so numerous that it's said Mercury himself wrote 30,525 volumes on universal sacred lore. A single human lifetime is scarcely enough to even read them, let alone master their content.

What about the rest? I will not elaborate on how, through long vigils, great effort, and diligent observance, you might have fully grasped the hidden and wondrous secrets of magic by employing astrological methods, secrets that make hands obey, stars tremble, divine spirits yield, and elements

serve. Using either the invincible power of this discipline and the force of the attendant spirits, or, if you prefer, with the timely assistance of the pure gods, you could perform a ritual utterly free of imperfection. Yet, when confronted with the immense and elaborate pomp of the sacred rites, an overwhelming spectacle, you would recoil from such a cumbersome burden. You would leave the work unfinished, doomed to your own personal detriment and an object of mockery for others. For, as Iamblichus and Porphyry affirm, we know of no one, however righteous their life, who can summon and move the gods except those priests who have already been tested and seasoned by this very labor. He who does not honor each divinity with its proper honor, nor distributes gifts and offerings most similar to their condition, will not obtain their presence and the desired effects. It is like a harmony; if one string breaks, the whole becomes dissonant.

These are the firm foundations from which this discipline is to be received. Therefore, free us, Capnion, from this great mass and unbearable burden. You promise to liberate our study from so many altars, demons, precepts, rites, and vain observances. I haven't even mentioned the celestial ones. How many are there? The Platonists reckon an infinite number of minds as the first ideas. Orpheus introduced 350 gods. Then think about the primary terrestrial divinities which the ancient writer, Heliodorus, numbered 13,000 in his *Aethiopica*.

To make amends to each of these is beyond man and surpasses our strength. But now the sun is rising; begin, most eloquent Capnion.

Then Capnion said: If nature had made me more eloquent, no moderate thanks would be due to you, Sidonius, for showing such a great supply of examples, which provides us with abundant material for building this divine subject. If I were a disciple of Chrysippus, I would rejoice in this richness of your ornate eloquence. But I am not suited for that elegance, nor does this sacred matter

demand it; rather, it rejects charming words. As the Scriptures warn, in much talking sin will not be lacking. Horace bids us: “Whatever you precept, be brief.” I am compelled to be brief.

Indeed, if we were not so familiar, I would test the disposition, nature, life, study, and age of each of you, and your capacity for silence. For as Gregory of Nazianzus teaches, it is not permitted for everyone, nor at every moment, to philosophically inquire about God, nor is it fitting to delve into every mystery concerning Him. There are specific conditions that determine for whom it is suitable, when it is appropriate, and to what extent it should be done. But you, I know to be prepared from yesterday's tablet. I demand nothing further, except what Terence's Simo demanded: silence and attentiveness. We are beyond twenty-five years of age, beyond which no Hebrew, as Baruchias will confess, is allowed to touch the divine Scriptures. This knowledge is not for the profane multitude, but for priests alone, as Plato warned Dionysius of Syracuse, and Dionysius the Areopagite warned Timothy. But we are priests, since, as Firmianus Lactantius wrote to Emperor Constantine, the teachers of true wisdom are also the priests of God.

Therefore, let us beware of being considered profane. Your goodwill makes you apt hearers, your hope makes you attentive, and your faith makes you docile. It is love that preserves us in prayer and grants effect to our vows.

Now, the art of miracles (if it can be called such) is divided into three parts, each with its own speculations: Physical, Astrological, and Magical (which contains both Goetia and Theurgy). They are all related, so that Astrology without Physics promises foolishly, and Magic without Astrology and Physics strays from true reason.

But you, having cast away all these for their vain and laborious outcomes, demand a fourth way, which we can call Soliloquy, where whatever is promised succeeds with noted power. I will do it

as far as permitted. But know this first: the Pythagoreans and Plato himself judged that the perception of divine things cannot be had by any art, but must be revealed, as Plotinus and Proclus affirmed. Our theologians, and yours, attest this. We must first offer ourselves purified, commend ourselves to the divine light, and then, with senses closed and a quiet mind, await the celestial rain, praising that sea of goodness from which all miracles and divine streams emanate.

Therefore, in the beginning, with humble steps, this hymn is to be brought forth to excite pious minds:

O Source and Creator of all that is, King of the Heavenly Realms, our Light and our Hope. You before whom the shadows tremble, who guides the vast, dark multitude. Boundless Love of the angels, Unconquerable Lord of the Underworld. You are the sacred worship of all born on earth. We call you by your holy names: Adonai, Adonen, Elohenu. Basileus, Pantocrator, Protogenethlios. You are the One God, the Unchanging God, the God who sustains all. Descend to us from on high, and be gracious.

This hymn having been said, Capnion began again: The entire substance of a true miracle, whether great or small, is to be observed by a prescribed rule; the time is to be referred to the glory of God, whose name is blessed forever. For he alone is he who, without delegated power, does such wonderful things, of which we can scarcely know the cause.

This precept stands forth: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who alone does wonders." If He alone does great wonders, then it was not a man who performed them. If He alone does great wonders, then it was not demons. If He alone does great wonders, then it was not angels. The inevitable conclusion is that God alone is the ultimate author of miracles, whether He acts directly or uses the senses and faculties of His creatures as instruments. For reason says that whoever

cannot do something by himself, cannot do it by another in his name. Aristophanes says facetiously: "Jupiter rules through the gods," not that the lesser gods rule in God's place. The philosopher, the Virgilian Opilio, who sings: "Jupiter fills all things," will not permit this. The angels, who dwell in God, rule, govern, and execute duties, and carry out commands.

The relationship we mortals have with the divine is fundamentally different. As my teacher Paul says, and as the poet Aratus attests in his Phaenomena, we are 'God's coworkers.' We are a race that shares, in part, a nature with the angels, beings in whom and through whom God acts according to His will. This leads to the essential conclusion: it is not we who perform miracles, but God, who is the best and greatest, to whom we confess, who alone works great wonders, for His mercy is eternal. From this, we understand that the true worker is God. We understand that the cause of His operation is His eternal mercy, His piety, His compassion, and His grace. It is a gift given freely, not compelled by law, rigor, debt, or any obligation. And finally, we understand the ultimate purpose of these miraculous works: that He may receive the confession, magnificence, glory, honor, and worship worthy of God, the Lord of lords, a truth we confirm fundamentally because He is good.

Wherefore let some be ashamed who think there is an art by which the divinities are bound by the narrowness of words or chains of characters. He who is accustomed to command is not to be commanded. The doctrine of portents can be powerful, but of miracles there is none, unless there is a burning union with divinity. By which, not we through God, but God through us, gratifying the vows of His friends, produces what others admire.

Therefore, not with impunity did Moses and Aaron presume to produce water from the rock, attributing it to themselves so that their name would grow. They foolishly cared that their own gravity not be diminished, while God's majesty was wounded. Wherefore they were forbidden to

enter the Promised Land, to teach that the operation of miracles ought to be referred to the one highest God, who alone does great wonders. Not to us, certainly, but to the name of God, is glory to be given.

Sidonius said: Therefore, we do not do miracles, nor is there an artificial power to learn? In vain did we wait to speak with you about the wonder-working name? By Pollux, Capnion, it will seem a wonder that you now deny what you affirmed before. You said, if I recall correctly, that the people who perform miracles are themselves the source of the power; now you say God alone. What inconsistency? We can challenge you with the deeds of our ancestors.

To omit poetic things—the witch who stops waters, the magic of Lucan, Pirithous drawing down the moon, the omnipotence of Circe, the transformations of Proteus—I prefer to fight with histories: Tarquinius Priscus, by the augur Attus Navius, cut a whetstone with a razor. Pythagoras was at the same moment in Tivoli and Metapontum. Apollonius of Smyrna was suddenly transported to Ephesus by a spoken word and restored a dying girl in Rome as Philostratus witnesses.

By this example, we are established that you, with equal learning, could with your mouth alone effect sudden wonders, proving true philosophy is with us. What use is it to tell of wonders, only to never do any? The people have a great opinion of us concerning philosophy—the knowledge of divine and human things. But what satisfaction shall we provide without works? It is little to know letters, which any dilettantes learn. It is nothing to be extolled as learned. The common people think us foolish; the name of philosophy has come into reproach. Furthermore, we are also compelled by the vulgar to live piously by the same pagan rites and customs that they follow. Because of this, the distinction between us and the uneducated masses will be completely eroded, unless we support our lofty philosophical profession with works just as marvelous as our words.

I am reminded of the gymnosophist, Thespion of Tyana, who came to test the wisdom of the Egyptian school. While sitting in a garden, he pointed to a tree and said: “O wood, speak.” And the tree responded. This is because masses believed one could not prove oneself a real philosopher without showing a prodigy beyond human judgment.

But you attribute to God alone what you deny to men. I am silent about the apostles, whose power was over all the world. What about Philip, who educated the treasurer of Candace? His daughter, Hermione, was struck by lightning yet unharmed; suspended by order of Hadrian, she sang hymns; placed in a cauldron of fire, lead, and boiling sulfur, but she extinguished the fire and said, “I feel the heat no more than you.” I could cite annals about Peter in Atroa, who crossed the river Halys with dry feet.

Then Baruchias said: You have spoken to us at length on this matter with an attentive and diligent mind, as one should, yet you have largely missed the point, unless I am mistaken. You have accurately stated our position, but you have interpreted it incorrectly.Recall our discussion yesterday: after we concluded that the highest divinity is beyond human understanding, you immediately inferred that through this 'society' and 'union' with God, we can produce wondrous miracles by uttering a single word of divine power. I must judge this the way people commonly do by attributing an action to the immediate instrument from which it emanates, which is what our crude senses perceive. For example, Horace writes in his Odes: ‘And the machine draws the dry keels.” Now, if you analyze the statement literally, you won't find a 'machine' that pulls ships on its own. The truth is, we are the ones who ingeniously construct mechanisms to pull a great mass through a narrow strait. So, it would be more accurate to say we draw the keels using machines. However, common usage favors the poet's phrasing: 'the machine draws the keels.’ We are forced to accept this same poetic convention with Homer. He says that Perseus, a master craftsman, built

Alexander's fleet, the very ships that destroyed Troy and killed Paris. But can we blame the ships of Perseus? They couldn't cause harm without a commander. It was Alexander who brought about the destruction, not the ships themselves. You might criticize the great poets for claiming the ships caused Troy's fall, when it was really Paris's sin of adultery and abduction that was to blame. But in this, as in many things, common usage must prevail, even among us when we speak of divine matters in human terms. Therefore, it is perfectly valid to say that 'men full of God perform miracles,' even though we acknowledge that it is truly God who performs them through pious men.

Frankly, I would have thought you were more discerning than to have such a simplistic view, and that you actually foresaw these conclusions better than I did.Nevertheless, I feel compelled to complain about Capnion's slowness. He has filled us with a great desire to learn about the wonder-working name, yet he keeps delaying, perhaps to keep us, his audience, in suspense. But as far as I'm concerned, that tactic won't work. I want nothing more than for him to speak. I won't let him think he can gather his thoughts indefinitely by this delay and thus slip away with a brief, inadequate answer. I suspect you are hesitant to press him because he carries himself with such professional gravity. He seems to believe that it would be a gross breach of artistic modesty and a cause for shame if he were to speak with anything less than absolute, unshakable authority. There is, after all, a type of man who deliberately hides his talent and masks his preparedness. They would rather appear inactive than be like a trained craftsman who is expected to produce 'learned rings', i.e. finished works of scholarship, on demand. I don't know if Capnion is merely pretending to be one of these reserved individuals. Personally, in our community of scholars, I wish everyone could be both a repository of knowledge ('honeycombs') and a source of its sweetness ('honey'), abundantly filled with the insights we cherish and the learning we accumulate together. I must confess, if my self-love doesn't deceive me, that many people beg me to teach them, and I often

only reluctantly agree after much pleading. Yet, when I do share, a great many delight in this open communication and the generous sharing of knowledge.

Sidonius: I think we should let Baruchias speak, then.

Capnion: He has constructed this entire debate to corner me, lest anyone accuse me of inventing my arguments. So now, Baruchias, you must speak. Reveal the words inscribed in your secret tablets, the ones you said you keep hidden 'under a bushel.' You have made it clear you have studied them extensively. For my part, I fully acknowledge that the learned Hebrews have contributed immensely to our understanding. We often follow their teachings more rightly than those of other nations, for it is evident that from their very origin, they possessed a profound memory of divine matters and worshipped God with sacred devotion.

And without needing further persuasion, Baruchias said: Very well. I will not seek a false reputation by evading your questions, a disrespectful act towards scholars of your stature. Nor will I say one thing and do another. The truth is, only a small number of teachings concerning the sacred names have been passed down from the Hebrew tradition. Therefore, I can explain them briefly. But first, secure the room. Ensure no uninitiated servant overhears us. We must not let these sacred mysteries be profaned, lest they become an object of ridicule, like pearls trampled underfoot by swine. Furthermore, I will deliberately speak in a somewhat veiled and obscure manner during this consultation. I must trust in the quality of your intellect to grasp the true meaning I intend to convey.

When the Supreme Divinity chooses to use a human being as its instrument, the process is precisely analogous to what the Peripatetic philosophers teach about the soul and the body's vegetative nature. In a living being, the vegetative (life-giving) faculty is the instrumental ground, and the

sensitive soul is the primary mover. When the soul acts upon the body, it does not directly descend to the lower, material level. Instead, it works through intermediary stages that are suited to both the soul's intention and the body's nature, transforming material into a form it can use. Consider the power of digestion in animals: the soul, acting as a nurturing force, uses as a medium a kind of innate, hidden digestive heat to break down and transform crude food. This heat is the essential agent of transformation. The process in a stomach is fundamentally different from cooking in an oven; we can see the modes are opposite. This digestive heat acts as a natural proxy, a kind of prophet or representative, carrying the formative imprint of the body's own nature. Because of this, the food does not remain as food. It changes into another substance entirely. Does this process turn it into grass or a plant? No, for then the animal would become plant-like. Instead, by a precise design, it is converted into flesh, a substance perfectly suited for the sensitive body, so that the soul, the 'sensible motor,' can fully inhabit and animate it.

In this same way, therefore, the most excellent God—who, as Mercury Trismegistus attests, fashioned two images after His own likeness: the World (the macrocosm) and Man (the microcosm)—interacts with His creation. He, as it were, 'plays' within the orb of the earth; this is spoken in parables to mean He delights and engages with the sons of men. Within the great image of the World, God performs His wonderful works not only through the observable powers of the stars and elements, but also through a hidden, innate tendency, i.e. an 'occult appetite.' This is similar to how a physician would explain the power of Coral, or any substance used in a medicinal suspension. Its effect is not due to a primary, elemental quality like heat or cold, but rather from a specific, hidden property. Just as I explained with animal nutrition—where transformation is ruled not by brute heat alone, but by a specific, innate digestive power—so too does God often work

through hidden sympathies and specific virtues within creation, rather than through obvious, mechanical forces.

Just as natural heat in digestion holds the place of occult things, so in effects from the secret disposition of things, it is not nature itself, but something obscure which precedes in the cause, whose instance bears the appellation of nature.

You now understand this regarding the world. Let us apply a similar logic to man, whom the Greeks call the 'Microcosm'. God takes greater delight in conversing with him than with the entire cosmos. Indeed, according to man's capacity, God strives to transform him into His own likeness. He accomplishes this transformation in two ways: on our part, He acts through the heat of the love we have conceived for Him. On His part, He acts through an occult property that we cannot comprehend, whether you call it a sacred covenant, an ineffable transfusion of His essence, or by any other name. Now, God, being all-powerful, could do all this directly, without any intermediaries. Yet, in His wisdom, He willed that many others should be participants in His goodness. These are what some call 'secondary causes,' others call 'virtues,' and not a few call 'gods,' 'angels,' or 'good spirits.' Their role is to serve as intermediaries. Each one, by its very nature, has a certain affinity both with God, who sets things in motion, and with the thing being moved. They are not remote controllers but proximate instruments, perfectly suited to bridge the gap between the divine and the created.

Thus, the Eternal Lord, who finds joy in our companionship, holds the purified human mind among His greatest delights, recognizing it as a nature and origin akin to His own. When He sees this mind pursuing Him with zealous worship and steadfast devotion, He continually works, as far as human frailty allows, to absorb and transmute it into His own being. This transformation is fueled by the warmth of our love for Him, but is ultimately accomplished through a hidden divine power.

The glorious purpose of this process is a twofold union: so that humanity may be drawn into the life of God, and God may come to dwell within humanity.

But just as that property by which we are transmuted into God is hidden, so God gave occult and secret names, and indulted to them certain steps, which, being observed with due pronunciation, he himself may presently approach.

But just as the process by which we are transformed into God and transcend our human nature is itself a profound and hidden mystery, so God also bestowed hidden and secret names. To these names He attached certain prescribed rites, which, being observed with correct pronunciation, God Himself is moved to draw near and make His presence felt.

To elaborate with an analogy: in the same way that the physical process of digestion involves an observable power, like heat, and also a hidden, mysterious power of transformation that we do not understand, so it is with this most divine journey into God. On this path, there are words whose meaning we comprehend, and there are other, secret words whose full power remains beyond our knowledge. Yet, both the known and the unknown words are united, forming a single, powerful bond.

This is because God is Spirit, and the word is its breath. Man is the living being who breathes that breath. God is the eternal 'Logos', the foundational Word and Reason. This same 'Word' is how He reveals Himself. Human reason, in turn, expresses itself through a similar principle of speech. Thus, God is first conceived in our mind and then uttered into the world through the word.

He chose a mansion in the sensible word, which divinity first instituted, not human invention. God knows the thoughts of man are vanity. But the thought of God is sustaining and certain; as he thinks, so it will be.

Therefore, as you have heard me explain, not every word we speak today holds inherent power. True force resides only in those specific words which were originally composed by the God of the supreme world and man, or by His insightful angels, or through the ancient and prudent tradition of God's people. These words are uniquely fashioned, resonating with the eternal harmony and possessing the unyielding essence of divinity itself. They serve as spiritual companions of benevolent will, acting as tangible monuments to an intangible reality. Their power is founded upon the unchangeable stability of their written letters and the everlasting firmness of their spoken sounds. This foundation allows them to embody both a profound, inherent rhythm and a natural ease of pronunciation, a power not manufactured or contrived, but born from a simple and venerable nature.

By these internunciaries God made a covenant with man. Not with just any man, though. But with those who shine with sanctity, piety, religion, and the confidence of faith. Therefore, if what is spoken ought to reconcile human mortality and the virtue of God, it will befit those sacrosanct names to be the first, right, and ancient, which you call barbarous on account of their uncultivated, simple antiquity. For antiquity is near to eternity, and eternity is near to God. Therefore barbarous things are more cognate to divinity. Zoroaster, the first of the ethnic theologians, forbade barbarous words to be changed.

They label the Hebrew language, and those tongues most closely derived from it, as ‘barbarous.’ However, the flowery ornamentation and so-called elegant distinctions that characterize other languages were invented later by men who were more curious than sincere. In contrast, the speech of the Hebrews is simple, pure, uncorrupted, holy, brief, and constant. It is the language in which Scripture records God speaking to man, and man speaking with angels, directly and face to face. Not through an interpreter, nor through pagan channels like the Castalian spring, the cave of

Trophonius, the oracle of Dodona, or the Tripod at Delphi, but as one friend speaks openly to another.

If you believe I say this out of national pride rather than sincere conviction, then compare the languages for yourself. You will find none purer or more chaste than Hebrew. As for its antiquity, if you doubt our historians, consult your own. You will find no writer more ancient than Moses. From his time to the capture of Troy, our chronicles count three hundred and ten years. In that era, the judge of Israel was Abdon; the ruler of the Argives was Agamemnon; the king of Egypt was Vafres; and the sovereign of the Assyrians was Teutames. I challenge you to find any volume, any record passed down from before the fall of Troy, that exists outside of the Hebrew scriptures. The earliest Greek poets, Homer and Hesiod, appeared, by Cicero's own account, a full hundred and fifty years after the Trojan War. Orpheus, with his mystical rites, came only a little before them. None of them, however, can compare in age to our author, Moses, who delivered his laws in a vastly more distant past.

Furthermore, we have the testimony of the Greek historian Eupolemus, who, in his esteemed work on the kings of Judea, recorded that Moses was a man of supreme wisdom and was the first to teach grammar and writing to the Jewish people. This knowledge was later, due to their close proximity, passed on by the Jews to the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians, in turn, introduced this system of characters to the Greeks to facilitate trade between them. This lineage is likely what led Pliny to conclude that the very first origins of letters were Hebrew. He notes that while some claim the Assyrians had them, and others argue for separate developments in Egypt or Syria, it was Cadmus who famously brought the first sixteen letters from Phoenicia into Greece. The entire region, connected by trade and culture, created this variety of claims. This confusion might also

explain why less meticulous historians, like Strabo in the sixteenth book of his Geography, have mistakenly identified Moses as an Egyptian priest or scribe.

Whatever, therefore, Moses, whose writing comes down to us, is older than any monuments of letters. Many Greeks confess this. Our Philo, and your Josephus, who wrote 'On Antiquity,' writes nothing alien from Moses. Polemon, in his Histories; Apion in Egypt under King Amosis; Ptolemy of Mendes in the Egyptian histories; and the Athenian historians Hellanicus, Philochorus, Castor, Thallus, Alexander Polyhistor, and Diodorus—all proclaim the antiquity of Moses.

This evidence makes it abundantly clear that Moses and the Hebrew tradition predate all others, not only in historical age but also in the antiquity of their religion, the admirable power of their secret operations, and their profound discipline of divinity.It is therefore pointless to seek words of heavenly origin and divine power from the Greeks. Their language and art are recent innovations, and their manner of speaking is the most modern. As Iamblichus of Chalcis, the disciple of Porphyry, observed, the Greeks are by nature obsessed with novelty and are intellectually rash. Their culture is like a ship without ballast, utterly lacking stability. They do not preserve knowledge received from older civilizations but quickly discard it, constantly transforming everything due to their inherent instability and their relentless pursuit of new forms of expression.

This is why an Egyptian priest in Plato's Timaeus was right to tell Solon, "O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children. There is no old man among you, for your souls are forever young. You possess no ancient memory passed down through generations, no discipline aged and hardened by time." This same recognition of Greece's shallow history likely motivated Ptolemy Philadelphus. Despite his fervent zeal for collecting ancient books and having amassed nearly seven hundred thousand volumes for the Library of Alexandria, he found his collection lacked the most crucial

pillar of antiquity: the writings of Moses, the first and oldest monument of ancient wisdom. To remedy this, he sent royal ambassadors to Jerusalem. They formally requested that each of the twelve tribes of Israel send six of its most learned and capable men to translate the Pentateuch, or rather, the entire volume we call the "Twenty-Four" books, meaning the Hebrew Bible. When these seventy-two scholars arrived, the king, wishing to spare them the tumult of the city, had a separate complex of seventy-two individual cells built for them on the island of Pharos, about seven stadia from Alexandria. The Church Father Jerome, writing to Desiderius, later attested that this account should not be dismissed as a fable, noting that a martyr had personally seen the remains of these cells still standing.

Therefore, the Scripture of the Hebrews was translated into Greek for the Egyptian king, lest he lack the first elements of the divine world, or be forced to confess, as to Solon, that neither he nor any Greek had that knowledge of antiquity which we have. This convinces us that for secret operations, no ancient names are to be sought from the Greeks; but neither from the Egyptians.

As Socrates argues in Plato's Cratylus: "All names for the gods must necessarily come from one of three sources: either from the gods themselves, from an antiquity so old its origins are lost, or from foreign 'barbarian' nations." However, the Egyptians themselves, by the testimony of their own sage Hermes Trismegistus, fashioned their gods with their own hands. In doing so, they completely misunderstood the true nature of divinity and failed to turn to the proper worship of the one God. So why would you search for the divine in a man-made object, a mere clay pot? How can sacred truths come from your own fictions, or heavenly aid from the work of your hands? Such hopes are in vain. Furthermore, how can you hope to learn the signs of the most high, supercelestial presence or the dwelling places of the supreme power from demons? These are not true gods, but beings the Egyptian forefathers created in their error and sin against true divinity. According to

Egyptian philosophy itself, the other, the supreme God dwells in the highest realm. These true celestial beings are called such precisely because they remain aloof and do not mix with our human affairs or enticements.

Therefore, the others, with whom there was daily conversation in the temples, are not God, but demons, made by the forefathers against the pleasure of God; born after men. They are either so foolish that they do not speak but only make sounds, or so versatile they flatter the ears of Egypt. Whence you can have nothing stable, firm, constant, or pleasing to God. You can understand this from the better philosophers of that region.

I maintain that the sacred names of God originated first with the Hebrew people, whose nation is the most ancient. It is true that others, like the Egyptians whom Plato praises, boast of a vast timeline, claiming records of deeds from nine thousand years ago. However, I am inclined to regard such immense numbers as fables, and I consider their accounts to be full of mythical inventions. But if they dismiss my skepticism, I would ask them to apply the same standard to their own sources. Let them freely acknowledge what Cicero records about the Babylonians and Chaldeans: that their own monuments purportedly contain a history spanning 470,000 years. This number, by their own admission, is far greater than even the Egyptians claim.

The Babylonians, or Assyrians (formerly called Syrians), made Babylon and Nineveh the head of the kingdom, as Strabo and others have said. But Syria is the land of Damascus, bordering the Persians, whence the nation of the Jews originated first, as Trogus, Justin, and others attest.

Therefore, the Jewish people, who historically were Syrians and Assyrians, can demonstrate, even by the accounts of external authors, that their written records are far more ancient than those of the Egyptians. Consequently, the Jews surpass both the Egyptians and the Greeks in their connection

to God. It follows that the names used by the Hebrews are more sacred than those of the Egyptians for two reasons: first, they are older, and second, they were handed down within the worship of the one, true, and primary God. I would add a further point: for a long period, due to their cultural rudeness, the Egyptians had not yet invented a proper alphabet and system of writing. Instead, they 'wrote' using the great objects of nature itself, a form of writing which persists in their sacred inscriptions, known as hieroglyphics. The conclusion is this: even if the divine and revered names used in Egypt were effective for performing secret miracles, we have already shown that their power does not come from the gods (who, as their own great author Hermes Trismegistus reveals, are actually demons, created after mankind). Nor does their power derive from the ancient written traditions that supposedly contain them, for the Hebrew scriptures are in every way superior to those traditions. This is a truth we will now put to the test. Furthermore, we must investigate the third point of our Socratic inquiry: whether these Egyptian names even originated from the so-called 'barbarian' peoples themselves.

Herodotus, the father of history, teaches us in his second book that the Egyptians objected more strongly than any other nation to being called 'Barbarians.' It was precisely because they so despised the term, considering it a mark of disgrace, that the Hebrews deliberately used it to refer to themselves. This is a form of irony, much like sarcastically calling a prostitute a 'noble lady.' We see this same ironic usage in Roman history, where famous courtesans like Cypheris, Origo, and Arbuscula were ironically termed 'noble.' The historian Sallust provides another example of this inverted language. He notes that the politician Catiline had a scandalous affair with 'the noble woman Fulvia.' Here, a title of virtue is used for someone engaged in a vice, turning it into a reproach. Sallust later expands on this idea, contrasting this corrupted concept of 'nobility' with the true nobility of character possessed by Cicero, a 'new man' whose rise to the consulate the old

aristocracy was viewed as a pollution. In that era, they failed to see that true nobility lies not in bloodline, but in moral rectitude.

Therefore, I interpret this cautiously: when scripture says Israel came 'from Egypt' and the house of Jacob 'from a Barbarian people,' it means that Judah considered his own origin to be something sacredly set apart. My judgment is that the Egyptians were labeled 'Barbarians' as a term of contempt, specifically *because* they found the title so offensive. The Hebrew word used here, *Loes*, actually conveys a sense of rudeness and dullness. It's a linguistic variant, where the letter *n* has shifted to *l*, but the term is consistently understood to mean 'barbarians.' Thus, the Egyptians' own sensitivity about the name is precisely why it was applied to them. Given this, how could they ever accept the priestly decree of Zoroaster, the famed master of sacred rites, which commands the use of 'barbarian' speech in holy matters?

Therefore, the "barbarian" language we advocate for sacred use is the primordial and incorruptible one, not the Egyptian language of Moses's time. This is supported by the fact that Moses, a Hebrew, confessed to God that he was a ‘barbarian,’ stating, "My Lord, I am not an eloquent man, but slow of speech and slow of tongue". The geographer Strabo, in his fourteenth book, explains that the term "barbarian" was originally applied to people who spoke in a rough, harsh, or clumsy manner. It was an onomatopoeic label, much like we have words such as "stammerer" or "stutterer" ("blæsus" and "ballosus"). These terms are cognate with the sounds they describe, similar to words like "murmur," "clangor," "strepitus," and "crepitus."In this original sense, "barbarian" simply denoted a raw, unpolished mode of speaking, which is the very quality that characterizes the powerful and immutable language of sacred tradition.

If we examine all histories, we will find all Eastern nations bear the name 'barbarian' with annoyance, except our Moses and his people, who openly did not deny he was slow of speech and

a barbarian. He handed this down through letters. It is fitting for us to deny we are barbarians, following their footprints and imitating their speech. Not that our speech lacks rationale; we compose our idiom according to rule and exercise grammatical art. For Hebrew adolescents: *Mole Kymbei, Magister Ephod*, which we interpret in the Gallic manner as “I must be perfected”; and Halta and other school presidents instruct both mouth and pen. Wherefore, not as speechless and rustic, but as the first men, whom all ancient investigators of the universe asserted were barbarians.

Some of our own scholars, having failed to grasp this distinction, have incorrectly taught that anyone who does not speak the so-called ‘holy language’ must be a barbarian. This is the interpretation offered by Solomon the Scholastic in his commentary on the hymn I mentioned, regarding the word Loes, and by a few other elementary instructors. This kind of error is not uncommon; even in our own time and in other fields, we see unlearned men attempting to write sophisticated works. For my part, however, I am convinced of a different theory: the most eminent Egyptian priests actually imitated Hebrew names. They used these names because they were more powerful, capable of effectively revealing hidden truths, and they had acquired them only through prolonged and secret study, as the historical records attest. Because these names were foreign to their native tongue, the priests could not fully conceal their source, a fact that remains visible in the historical accounts. This further demonstrates the unique power of the Hebrew language. Even the great Greek philosophers Plato and Eudoxus lived in Heliopolis for thirteen years, yet through long and diligent conversation, they managed to gather only a handful of that people's secret words, which they then sparingly sprinkled throughout their own writings.

We need not spend much time disputing the Indian philosophers, the Brahmins, as it is evident they derived their foundational knowledge from the Greeks. This is clear from the many Greek-style idols worshipped there according to Greek rites, such as Minerva, Apollo of Delos, and

Dionysus, which Philostratus carefully documents in his Life of Apollonius of Tyana. Furthermore, Indian philosophies and disciplines align with Greek ones. For instance, the teachings on the human soul attributed to the Brahmin sage Iarchas, in his dialogues with Apollonius, are virtually identical to those Pythagoras taught the Greeks, which were themselves handed down from the Egyptians. Some use this to suggest the Brahmins were the original teachers of the Egyptians, implying a very ancient tradition. However, this theory is undermined by the timeline: Iarchas was said to have lived in a relatively recent era, a period not known for producing any great philosophers or intellectual geniuses in India.

But among the Druids of the Gauls, there are not many centuries to be sought; they all philosophized in Greek and for that reason did not wish to be later than the barbarians.

Lest I overwhelm your ears with too many speeches, my loquacity having strayed, while I try to affirm that the most ancient barbarian words must be chosen for effecting miraculous works—not Phoenician, not Greek, not Egyptian, not Indian, not of the Druids... nor was it so contiguous, being near to Damascus and Persia. But I affirm this of that most ancient Hebrew nation and language, whose speech came all the way to Moses pure and holy, reporting the first beginnings of the world from its origin, which we necessarily think the firstborn received not from man but from God alone, especially in the divine names, whose imposition is above man.

On this matter, let us consult Socrates. I will cite your preferred authority, Plato, rather than my own. In the dialogue, Socrates says to Hermogenes: "I tell you, Hermogenes, if we were wise, we would adhere to this principal rule: we would confess that we know nothing about the gods, not about their nature, nor even about the names they use for themselves." As Plato records, Socrates insists that the gods indeed possess their own true names, which are not of human invention but are what they call themselves.

Sidonius: Certainly, you seem to object to me, and you are promising us these things.

Baruchias: This concept aligns with the core of our philosophy: that God unites with the human mind and dwells within us, especially when we are spiritually transformed and aligned with Him. He operates through us in two ways: sometimes using us as an artisan uses a tool, and other times acting directly and suddenly, without any secondary causes. Since God is capable of both, and since any action He performs through us requires a suitable medium, you would agree this arrangement is fitting for both God and humanity. You seem to be suggesting that our words are precisely this kind of medium. They are the bridge reaching God through the inner, enclosed spirit and reaching man through the physical medium of audible air. You have, it seems, captured this entire profound idea in just two words.

I am speaking of the theory passed down from Democritus to his follower, Epicurus, a school of thought I explicitly renounce and do not wish to endorse. I reference it for two reasons: first, because ideas absorbed in one's youth often persist in memory; and second, when different philosophies arrive at a similar conclusion, that consensus can be a faint footprint of truth. Their particular insight is that the human voice is a rheuma logonides, a ‘stream of reasoned thought.’ According to this view, when our internal reason strikes the air, which is shaped by the tongue, it manifests as an external, spoken word. Thus the fountain is reason; whose stream is the word; which in the fountain agrees with God, and in the stream and river agrees with man. So that nothing is in the stream which was not first in the fountain. According to Aristotle: nothing is in the voice which was not first conceived in the soul, just as letters are the signs of the voice.

On this subject, Ammonius the Peripatetic wrote, and I pray you forgive my clumsy interpretation, which may not be as ornate as his own: "For in this art: letters indeed only signify; things, however, are only signified. But voices and intellections both signify and are signified. For voices indeed

are signified once (by letters); but they signify in two ways: namely, first they signify intellections, and secondly they signify things. But intellections indeed are signified in two ways: they are signified both by voice and by things; but by things first, and by voice secondly." This very complexity, demonstrated by authorities like Aristotle and Ammonius, reveals the dual nature of our words. A word is a hybrid, communicating partly with the incorporeal spirit and partly with the physical body. It is for this reason that I consider it the most fitting medium, a bridge between man and God, for that certain concealed power which words can hold.

But that I have chosen those barbarian words as more cognate to divinity is not so ridiculous. As Iamblichus says: “The gods have approved the speech of the barbarians because of the greatest congruence of the signs,” especially because that mode of speaking was more ancient and primary. The first men received names divinely, mixed them with their own language, and handed them down to be kept perpetually; we thus ought to preserve the very rule of tradition.

Led by these precepts of Iamblichus: “Nothing therefore forbids us to praise those things about which Zoroaster said: one ought not to change the barbarian words,” that is, the Hebrew.

Sidonius: And you, Baruchias, have used such genius and copiousness of speech and so many historical testimonies that you easily move me to assent, and nothing stands in the way except one thing: the experience of the ancients, who say that not only the Egyptians and others, but also the Greeks effected more admirable things with words, excelling in repelling dangers and obtaining comforts.

They relate that Orpheus, the Egyptian follower of Mercury, the first priest and theologian, since he was one of the Argonauts, averted a Thracian tempest by his sacred rites and first demonstrated auguries from birds and other living things. Yet the same man used Greek invocations, as his hymn

proves, which is sung in Greek to this day. But Pythagoras and Plato learned all sacred things from the Egyptians, some from the Assyrians and Chaldeans, and showed incredible wonder-working works to men. Wherefore not only the Hebrews, but also other nations have their sacred names.

Then Baruchias: The term ‘sacred’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘holy,’ referring to something that is inviolable and protected from human profanation. At other times, it has a specific legal meaning. As the jurist Martianus defines it in civil law: “Sacred things are those which have been publicly consecrated, not privately.” To put it another way, as the eminent jurist Ulpian defined it: "Something is sacred if the sovereign has formally dedicated it, or has granted the authority for others to do so." In this manner, whatever is consecrated to God and withdrawn from common use is called sacred, holy, and sometimes sacrosanct, according to the rite of a nation.

This is why the Egyptian priest in Plato’s Timaeus told Solon that the great deeds of history were “preserved in the annals and sacred records of the Egyptians.” In the same manner, an entire order of priests who have been consecrated is traditionally described as being "devoted and set apart for God." We see this concept reflected in poetry, such as when Virgil writes of Helenus, the priest of Apollo: "He begs, he says, the peace of the gods and loosens the sacred fillets from his head." Likewise, later in the epic, he describes how Caesar, celebrating a triple triumph, "made an immortal vow to the gods of Italy", a public and sacred dedication.

Furthermore, we use the word ‘sacred’ in another more profound sense. We apply it to God Himself, the author of all things, often with a voice trembling in awe. We call Him sacred as the ultimate source and fountainhead of all holiness. From this primary source, all other things become sacred by participation, specifically those things in which God is spontaneously present with His supreme power and goodness. This concept of sacredness is fundamentally different from the legal one. In the legal sense, we are the active party, dedicating things to God. In this higher sense, God

is the active party, dedicating Himself to us, and illuminating our world with His presence. Therefore, the things most rightfully called "sacred" are those in which God truly dwells. This does not mean angels or demons, but God Himself, the Best and Greatest of lights. It is only by extension that we call the angels ‘sacred’, because God also dwells within them, and they are said to bear His name.

On the contrary, we call the pagans execrable, from whom God is far away. As Statius said: “Brotherly battle-lines fought with pagan hatreds.” According to the primary path of the word, just as sacred things are those dedicated by us to God, so 'pagan' can be interpreted from *a fano et religione*, those who live outside sacred things. From 'making sacred' and 'sacrificial,' the king who makes sacred, and 'sacrificial' is denominated from 'sacred.'

In the book of Metamorphoses: “The happy day had come on which Achilles, the victor of Cygnus, was placating Pallas with the blood of a heifer.” When he had placed the entrails on the glowing altars, and the smoke was carried through the air: “The sacred part is given to the flames, the rest of the harvest is for you.” For he wishes the sacred sacrifices consume their own portion.

I will not, therefore, deny that images, characters, letters, words, or names dedicated by us to God are sacred: not only among the Hebrews, but also the Egyptians, Greeks, and other nations; these are the objects that humans have consecrated to the divine as they understood it. I shall bring forth the example you, Sidonius, adduced concerning the ancient priest and prophet Orpheus, Hermes the Egyptian, and the founder of the Pythagorean philosophy.

As in the hymn to the Lycian Venus: “For our leaders, watching over the divine of the fatherland, erected a sacred colossus near the town.” I know some have thought this hymn was by Proclus,

because he mentions his fatherland. But let us hear another of Orpheus's songs composed for altars: “Therefore, with sacred voices now call upon the pure demons.”

Therefore, that which is sanctified not by human invention, but by God Himself, the Best and Greatest, through His direct presence and power, imbuing it with His virtue, that one thing, above all others, is what truly deserves to be called sacred and holy. It is set apart by God and dedicated to His honor, not to human purposes. This is the precise reason we speak of the holy language of the Jews, and their sacred scriptures written by the finger of God, and the divine names that were not coined by men, but instituted by God alone.

If ever any nation uses its own voices in miracles, it is proved to be by the trickery of demons rather than a true miracle; effected not by divine power, but by the passion of a demon and by chance, done at peril, as we argued yesterday. In sum, as is the distance between the signs of divine power and goetic sorcery, so much difference is there between the words of the Hebrews and the words of idolatry.

We have been taught through Moses, who turned his staff into a serpent by the word of God. But the Egyptian maleficians, whom they called wise, with incantatory words of human discipline obtruded similar images, which the rods of Moses devoured. Wherefore a noble philosopher at Rome recently proposed to me: that no names in any magical work have as much virtue as the Hebrew, or those derived from them, because all first things were formed by the divine voice. For that in which nature exercises its ultimate power is the word of God.

Now, Sidonius, I will not allow you to stand any longer on what is deservedly manifest. I believe many peoples have mixed Hebrew words with their own secret vows for no other cause than to more certainly obtain their desires. I think it must not be doubted in Orpheus, Pythagoras, and

Plato that no other secret was so hidden, now revealed, than the Hebrew names of divine virtue, which they did not wish to be made public by any writing; as Plato himself intimates to Dionysius the Syracusan through a letter.

Let me pose a question to you, Capnion: Why is it that the Evangelists and Apostles translated Christ's teachings into Greek, yet deliberately left the very words He used to perform miracles in their original Hebrew? They transmitted these potent phrases unchanged and intact, inserting them as ‘barbarian’ words into the Greek text, like the acclamation ‘Hosanna’ and the plea ‘Elaina Domine’ (which was later corrupted by scribal error into the common ‘Osanna’). Luke, anticipating a Greek audience and knowing he could not perfectly translate these terms without losing their essential power, made a conscious choice. He decided it was better to preserve the original, mysterious words than to offer a flawed and inadequate translation. The other Gospel writers, though not facing the same stylistic concerns as Luke, followed the same principle. They insisted that ‘Hosanna’, that remarkable word concerning divine names, must be included in its original form at all costs.

Likewise the Gospel of Mark, in the miracle of Christ raising the little girl, did not hesitate to write the very words of Christ in Hebrew, by which the dead was restored to life.

The text states that Christ took the girl by the hand and said two words: ‘Thabiti Kum.’ The first word, Thabiti (or Thabita in some forms), is a command meaning ‘Look!’ The second, Kum, means ‘Arise!’ This has been misunderstood by well-intentioned translators. By adding a clarifying note in the margin, they mistakenly led readers to believe the phrase was ‘Thabita Kum’, interpreted as ‘Girl, I say to you, arise.’ This is an error, as the original command was not specifically addressed to a ‘girl’ but was a universal imperative. I am astonished that some of our most renowned and learned scholars, upon reading this, have concluded that Thabita was the girl's name. This is the

interpretation I myself, when I was a Jew, always accepted, following the tradition of Apollonius of Tyana and other philosophers.

But now, having been more perfectly instructed, I affirm that Christ is superior to the angels and above all gods, not merely all men, and I believe Him to be God Himself, all-sufficient. Therefore, we must understand His actions in this light: He, as God, had no need to first discover some ‘secret formula’ to perform the miracle. This stands in stark contrast to the stories about the magician Apollonius of Tyana, whose legends claim he revived a seemingly dead bride by first learning her name and then chanting a hidden incantation. This belief in the power of a true name was a common magical principle. Even the Romans observed a similar ritual; when besieging a city, they would diligently seek its sacred name. Once they discovered it, they would perform rites to ‘call out’ the city's tutelary gods, luring them away so the city would be defenseless. The city's own high priest was sworn to guard this true name, never to reveal it, lest its divine protector be subverted. Christ's power was of a completely different order; it was inherent to His divine nature, not dependent on any such occult knowledge or ritual.

From this, we can see that the true names of things were believed to hold great power in the ancient world. The demonic spirit that possessed the girl understandably tried to hide this knowledge from Christ, preventing Him from learning her name, as such knowledge was thought to be a source of control. But Christ had no need for such arcane methods. His words, ‘Thabiti Kum’, translate simply as ‘Look, Arise.’ With ‘Look’, He restored her perception, allowing her to see the light. With ‘Arise’, He restored her bodily strength, allowing her to stand. Through this direct command, He freed her not only from physical death but from the entire cycle of worldly suffering and evil.

But I preach to you in vain, for you have often read in our Old Testament scriptures how this very word is used. Consider Psalm 12, titled *Michtham*, which begins "How long, O Lord?" and

includes the verse, "Look, hear me, O Lord my God." Or Psalm 21, which starts "My God, my God," where a verse states, "All who saw me laughed at me with scorn." Again, in Psalm 33, "Rejoice in the Lord," we find "The Lord looked down from heaven," and in the following Psalm, a verse pleads, "Look upon me and have mercy upon me"—a phrase your own translation renders as "Come to him and be enlightened." Furthermore, in the daily lauds sung at the first hour, we say "In the morning... Reveal my eyes, and I will consider," where the true sense is better captured by "Look upon the wonderful things of your law."

In all these instances, the underlying Hebrew word is *Habita*. The variation in Christ's command—between *Thabita* and *Thabiti*—is merely a common grammatical shift between the second and third person, meaning ‘you may look’ or ‘look!’ This is a frequent feature of Hebrew, just as Latin poets might use *asternis* for *asternas* or *camena* for *camenas*. The second word Christ used, *Kumi*, is unambiguously the perfect imperative in the feminine gender, meaning ‘Arise!’ This exact form appears in the Song of Solomon: "My beloved speaks to me: 'Arise [Kumi], come, my friend.'"

This is how the original words of the sacred scriptures have been corrupted in many places by unlearned men. The theologians of our age are now more practiced in the dialectical sophistries of Aristotle than in attending to the words of divine inspiration and the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the pursuit of human invention neglects heavenly tradition itself, and the loquacity of men stifles the divine voice. This scribal error even crept into the apostolic writings, for it is a common ailment among both the learned and unlearned, as seen in the case of Dorcas. In the story set in Joppa—a town in Judea near Lydda, as Pliny notes—the woman’s name is often written incorrectly in the Greek and Latin codices of learned works, as I have frequently observed. It is by this same error that I believe they also faltered in the Gospel passage we discussed earlier. The woman’s true name was Tabia, an Assyrian name meaning 'Roe' (as we find in the book of Obadiah, called Illen

Pithgamai), and its translation as Dorcas confirms this. The original was spelled without an aspiration and without a 't' in the final syllable.

Another example comes from the Gospel of Mark, where Christ heals a deaf and mute man. The people begged Jesus to lay His hands on the man. So, taking him aside from the crowd, Christ put His fingers into the man's ears, touched his tongue with saliva, and looking up to heaven, He sighed and commanded, ‘Hiphatbah,’ which means, ‘Be opened.’ This word, Hiphatbah, has a specific grammatical form. It is the passive imperative of the Hebrew verb Patah, meaning "he opened." Its correct spelling begins with the letters H, *p*, and *h* and ends with a strong aspiration. The future tense of this verb is Ephatbah, meaning "it shall be opened." We find this same root used in the Psalms, such as in Psalm 78: "I will open my mouth in parables," and in Psalm 51: "O Lord, open my lips."

For you, not so skilled in Greek as in Hebrew literature, form the masculine imperative *Hiphatbah* from the passive *Niphatbah*, 'it is opened,' that is 'Be opened' or 'You are to be opened.' Just as Christ powerfully thundered the word.

Let us now turn to the moment of His supreme sacrifice: hanging upon the wood of the cross and nearing death, He cried out the words of the twenty-second Psalm according to the Hebrew numbering—which you, following the Septuagint, count as the twenty-first: "Eli Eli lama azabtani."This is the form recorded by Matthew, though the word Azabtani is itself a slight corruption, its first syllable lacking the proper 'a' sound. Mark's version is even less precise; he writes Eloi or, in some manuscripts, Elobi, which is an awkward rendering. The Hebrew word for God is Elohe, and Elobi is not a recognized form. While Elohai correctly means "my God," I believe the dying Christ was intentionally recalling the precise, prophetic words of the Psalm, which should not be altered. Furthermore, I am convinced that from the outset of His Passion until

His final breath, He recited the Psalter. In His last gasp, He reached the Psalm that is numbered the thirtieth in the Septuagint, thus framing His entire suffering within the symbolic number thirty—from the agony in the garden to the final surrender of His spirit.

For just as the priests of posterior Judea promised thirty silver pieces before Christ was captured, so he himself to God the father paid thirty psalms before he died. You will grant me pardon if it is not permitted to compare the perverse with the good. Consider and recount with your minds that this blessed man (if it is right to name him a man) fittingly completed his whole condemnation and torment with these thirty psalms, beginning from the time of anxiety in the garden across the torrent he endured. Concerning which the whole fifty-fourth Psalm makes mention: “But I will call upon God, and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and noon, I will speak and announce.” He was speaking through the whole time of his passion with God, evening, morning, and noon. He often prayed in silence, a fact He had foretold through David in the words: “My prayer is kept close within my own heart,” meaning His deepest supplications were internal and hidden, not always spoken aloud.” Sometimes, however, he pronounced certain of the same verses openly, which his followers hearing nearby committed to memory.

Therefore, based on the tradition handed down to us, I conclude that His final utterances were: "Eli Eli lama azabtani" and "Into your hands I commend my spirit." Some manuscripts give the title of this last prayer as pro extasi (‘for ecstasy’), a state that fittingly describes a dying man, though this title is not found in the Hebrew texts. This sequence is itself filled with divine mystery. Notice that it is only after this Psalm (the 30th) that the inscription 'Maskil' appears, a term meaning ‘of understanding,’ ‘instruction,’ or ‘contemplation.’ This is profoundly significant, for it was only after Christ's death, of which this 30th Psalm was His final prayer, that we truly began to understand and see whom they had pierced. This is the very reason He made that special plea,

praying that the Father would forgive His executioners, for they did not know what they were doing.

I am trying to explain the Hebrew foundations that the Gospel writers undoubtedly used. I don't know how, but I have found myself delving deeply into this religion's secret layers. From my earlier thoughts, you should understand that I have converted to your way of thinking, and not without serious consideration.

Then Sidonius said: My dear Capnion, this man is skilled in holy scripture. What can I possibly add to our discussion? But I remember: Baruchias has put my mind at ease, so I don't feel pressured to speak about sacred names. He teaches that only Hebrew words, created in the air itself, have this power of communication. He tries to prove this based on their ancient origin, their direct connection to God, a special sacred relationship God has with the Jews, and because their language is more substantial, among many other arguments. If this is true, then I, who have spent more of my life on Greek and Latin than most, will use whatever time I have left just to listen.

And Capnion said: I would admire his great knowledge of the Gospels if he hadn't already admitted he studied them extensively, a fact that is obvious. But let's hear him speak while it's still light. The afternoon is fading. Come, Baruchias, do not avoid sharing with us the secrets you have learned—those profound words you mentioned, which have been kept hidden away. We both earnestly urge and encourage you (for your speech brings us great delight, as Sidonius here would surely agree), since we are both keen disciples. So, what will you share with us, Baruchias?

Baruchias: I will tell you, provided you don't look down on my simple way of speaking, as I am not skilled in elegant rhetoric. And now, since evening is approaching, I won't press Capnion further, so you can explain: Why did the writers of Christ's life and teachings, though writing in

Greek, choose to include Hebrew words in their work? Furthermore, why are you accustomed to ending every vow, public or private, with the word 'Amen,' which is also found in Paul's writings?

To this, Capnion replied: I'll answer briefly so you don't get tired. However, you won't be hearing my own superior knowledge on this excellent subject, but rather the twisted logic of theologians. As the saying goes, “Where things are going well, who can improve things?” Origen, in his book *Against Celsus*, says: “A wonderful power lies hidden in certain sacred names, and therefore these names are not to be translated from Hebrew into another language, but are to be preserved in their original form.” There, you have what you've been trying to sniff out for a long time: it's enough to say that the names used to invoke God have a certain power, for which their original letters are also necessary. It's like how when a human body is destroyed, the spirit within perishes and life vanishes.

Furthermore, as Iamblichus responded to Porphyry: “If these names were just human inventions, it wouldn't matter if we changed them. But I learned long ago, and we know it to be true, that they are received from God, not invented by humans.” Iamblichus adds: “Names translated into another language do not preserve the same meaning for the mind. Each people have their own proper names, which cannot be fully expressed to other peoples.” Even if we can explain the meaning in another language, the translated words do not keep the same power.

I wish these authorities would satisfy you. But be careful not to think I agree with you that *all* words possess the majesty you claim. Who would doubt that an all-powerful God could endow His words with such power? God's ability is evident, but not His will, which is the only true cause of things. For “God made whatsoever he willed in heaven and on earth.” So, unless you can show that God *willed* for a specific word to have a specific power, you have accomplished nothing.

But I don't mean to lecture you, Baruchias. I only intend to report what I once learned about these secrets from our college. I promised to report on this. If I do my duty correctly, it will be a reason for me to rejoice, and I won't be taking a risk on another's behalf.

Our evening conversation has concluded that in divine matters, one must believe, as I assume you do, that God can do all things. Our minds naturally understand that God is above all things and that all things, both existing and non-existing, depend on Him, as even the greatest theologians affirm. This supreme power, nay, a power above the highest, over both existent and non-existent things, is in God's hand, bound by no limits. Otherwise, it would not be the highest.

Whether God demonstrates this power through a word or a thing doesn't matter, so long as He wishes His virtue to reside there. We know God's will either through experience or through divine inspiration. We must use both holy scripture and the contemplative doctrines of good men (through whom God speaks) as our guides. For “who has known the mind of the Lord?” No one, unless it is His own Spirit, or someone to whom He reveals Himself. Just as no one else can know a man's innermost thoughts by any effort, except the man's own spirit within him, or a close friend to whom he willingly discloses them, whether his spirit communicates through his words, or he himself reveals them through his own will.

That God spoke with Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, showed them the power of divine words, and confirmed it with miracles, is something our learned and experienced ancestors have affirmed and passed down to us in writing. We, receiving this with gratitude, feel its truth daily through experience.

To get to the point: For those wishing to hear about wonders, remember what I discussed before: the one, first, and greatest God alone performs miracles and signs in every age, not through magic.

Sometimes He commands His angels to perform wonderful works, but He does so in His own name, so that His honor is never given to another, and so that humans are not tempted to worship a creature instead of the Creator. Therefore, we must not rashly use His name for angels, which He strictly forbids, to avoid the worship of images, which we call idolatry.

God said to His people: “I send my angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Listen to him, and do not think him worthy of contempt, for he will not pardon your sin. For my name is in him.” So, since marvelous deeds are performed first by God and secondly by angels, I must first speak about the divine name that belongs to God Himself, and then, as far as our weak human understanding allows, about the names pertaining to angels.

I will follow this order: First, I will recount the names of God whose meaning is already clear. Then, I will attempt to recount those whose meaning are not yet widely known or are revealed to only a few.

Many of our fathers, and even many of yours today, have been eager to ascribe power to secret names. To make this easier, I will summarize what you have seen described at length by various authors. Jerome lists ten names of God. Dionysius the Areopagite lists nearly forty-five; others, seventy-two; others, more or less, each according to their understanding. But who can define the number of names for He who is both unnameable and celebrated by every name?

Therefore, to avoid getting stuck or treating this too superficially, I do not wish you to believe my words more than I believe them myself. The holy scriptures guide me, so that I, who am but dust and clay, a worm and not a man, do not seem to injure God, like Oza touching the ark, or add anything beyond the faith God Himself has spoken.

I judge the first sin of humanity to be this: that Eve added to God's words. God had said to Adam, “From every tree of paradise you may eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” But Eve, speaking to the serpent, said, “God commanded us not to eat from the tree in the middle of paradise, and not to touch it, lest perhaps we die.” She added the word 'us,' when God had commanded only Adam (as she wasn't yet created). She added “and not to touch it,” which God had not said. And she added a note of doubt, saying “lest perhaps we die,” when God had firmly told Adam, “on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.” For this, the serpent was punished for giving counsel, Eve for aiding, and Adam for transgressing.

Therefore, lest I fall into the same error before the awesome Creator, I must pray for His clemency, that He may regard my goodwill if my foot should slip.

But what is that so illustrious, efficacious, terrible, and sublime word? Since, as we said, many names for God are found, we must consider which is primary. The prophet Zechariah says, “In that day, God will be one and his name one,” which suggests that for now, there are many names, but in the future, there will be only one.

Why drag this out? Why waste time? Does the nameless divinity have a different name among celestials than among mortals? Will our worldly naming cease in the future life? When we consider God in Himself, does He have a name? Or will there be no need for one?

Setting aside these distracting questions, let me explain briefly. Whether the supreme divinity has a supereminent name among the immortals, I will instead focus on the names handed down to us. From a human perspective, we attribute some names to God's essence, some to His virtue, some to His operation, and the rest to our relationship with Him.

By 'essence,' I mean God's separation from all things, His being shut up in Himself in the most remote retreat of His divinity, a profound, solitary withdrawal in the abyss.

They affirm that God Himself instituted this venerable name for Himself among men, since He alone knows Himself; therefore, He alone can name Himself. Let's see how wise men have reasoned this out, and what the essence of that most holy name is.

Moses said to God, “When I go to the Israelites and say, ‘The God of your fathers sent me,’ they will ask, ‘What is his name?’ What shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “EHYEH ASHER EHYEH (I AM WHO AM). Thus you shall say to the Israelites: EHYEH (I AM) has sent me.”

Plato, during his long sojourn among the Assyrians, learned this name and translated it into Greek with two words. In the *Timaeus*, he says: “One must first distinguish what is ‘On’ (Being), which always is but has no birth; and what is born but never truly is. The former is comprehended by intellect, always being through itself; the latter is perceived by opinion and sense, subject to generation and corruption.”

So, Plato used this name to distinguish the world from the Creator. Many followed him, though some changed the neuter 'To on' (That Which Is) to the masculine 'Ho on' (He Who Is). Hebrew grammar compels this, as it lacks a neutral gender, absorbing it into the masculine.

So, whether one says 'He who is' or 'that which is,' it is predicated by the name God gave Moses: 'EHYEH,' which is derived from the verb 'Hayah' (to be). I know I am speaking crudely about an elegant matter before you learned men. But even a Demosthenes or Cicero would become speechless before God's secrets. As Origen said, “All men, compared to the divine word, are to be considered not only ineloquent but mute.”

Sidonius: Proceed. We know this subject is the most difficult of all. I myself think divine things can never be sufficiently expressed in human language. I'm reminded of the story of the learned Simonides. When the Tyrant Hiero asked him what God was, he asked for a day to think. Returning the next day, he asked for two days. Each time Hiero asked, Simonides doubled the time. When asked why, he said, “Because the longer I consider, the more obscure the matter seems.” So I marvel that you have been able to discuss this so clearly thus far. Please, do not delay us further.

But instead, Capnion urged Bacharius to proceed.

Bacharius: You have the name of the highest God, which some skilled men consider the first of all, as it seems to designate God's very essence, shared with nothing else. For nothing outside of God truly 'is,' because all other things are composites. God alone is most simple; therefore, He is 'He who is'; everything else is a 'what,' not 'that which is.'

Other studious men, delving into secret contemplation, have identified a name even above EHYEH or 'On.' For as your Dionysius the Areopagite explains: 'He who is' is the whole of being, a superessential foundation, the cause and maker of being, essence, nature, and the measure of eternities.

Here we can clearly perceive how the First Being interacts with the things that flow forth from it, giving them the power to continue existing. The First Being gives them essence, through which it makes itself known. It is the superessential foundation of all being, not as enclosed and resting, but as inventing and manifesting Himself infinitely to the things to which He grants existence, as you can understand from Dionysius's words. Therefore, considering God's ineffable, withdrawn nature, they venerate the most holy name 'HU' and place it before EHYEH. God revealed this in Isaiah, saying, “I am the Lord; HU is my name; I will not give my glory to another.”

You see, this name hides its light, as if under a bushel, and designates God dwelling solitary in hidden retreats, without any outward flow of virtues. He contains Himself in His own most simple and absolute consistency, not governing directly, but permitting all things. If things are evil, He does not remember them. As God says in Isaiah: “I am, I am HU, blotting out your iniquities for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

That HU does not give His glory to another, that He does not remember sins, shows the meaning of the name: HU denotes God as so separated from things that He acts, permits, or rests entirely within Himself. He often uses this name with negative statements, as in, “Understand that I am HU; before me no god was formed, and after me there will be no other.”

Greek philosophers, especially the Platonists, called this august name 'Tauton' (The Same), which translates to 'Idem' in Latin. This is because the first and hundred-first Psalms declare of God: “And you are HU, and your years shall not fail.” In Latin, you sing in church: “But you are the Same.” Virgil also transferred this name 'Idem' (The Same) to Jove, when Jupiter says, “King Jupiter is the same to all.”

So, the word 'Tauton,' which is 'HU,' possesses a superessential, eternal, unchangeable majesty. It remains in itself, is present to all things similarly, and is bounded by no limit. I fear I offend learned ears with Greek words, but we are in an academy of secret philosophy, which desires naked truth over ornate words.

I would place 'HU' above all, but I fear it might be seen as flowing down into our world and taking a name from created things. We see this in poetry, where 'The Same' refers to shared fates or experiences. Isaiah seems to explain this participation when God says, 'I am HU, I am the first and

I the last,' and 'I am HU who consoles you.' This shows that HU is present in the beginning, the end, and the middle of things.

To show you agree, hear Dionysius the Areopagite on 'HU' (which he calls 'Tauton'): “He shines forth from his own being upon all things that can receive him. From the overflowing source of his own oneness, he connects higher realities to lower ones, and he harmonizes opposing forces through the one supreme cause from which all identity originates.” As a king, He penetrates all things supernal, mundane, and infernal. No power in heaven, earth, or hell can resist this name. Therefore, the Lord is called 'HU of virtues,' because every virtue and power is subject to Him. The Psalmist asks, “Who is this HU, the king of glory?” The answer is, “The Lord of virtues, He Himself HU is the king of glory.”

Another thing comes to mind. Through Moses, among the seven names consecrated with HU, is also 'ETH,' which we call in Latin 'fire.' Therefore, God is often heard in fire, as with Abraham, Elijah, and Moses, who saw God in fire. Angels appeared in flame. Ezekiel had a vision of “the likeness of fire.” Plato called the highest God a fiery essence, though Aristotle criticized him for this, citing Homer that God sits in the ether.

But the prophet Zechariah speaks better, hearing God say through an angel: “I will be to him a wall of fire surrounding him for protection, and in glory I, EHYEH, will dwell within him.” Plutarch also mentions this, describing the knowledge of God as “an intellectual and fiery spirit, having no form, but transforming itself into whatever it wishes.” Zoroaster said, “All things were generated from one fire.”

You also, Capnion, or rather, we Christians, commonly talk about God in terms of 'fire' like Paul did when he wrote, “Our God is a consuming fire.” We understand this name and its power as

being attributed to the Holy Spirit, representing a distinct aspect of God's nature. This is what John the Baptist taught, as recorded in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, when he said: “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” In saying, 'the Holy Spirit and fire,' John uses a figure of speech called hendiadys, where two words express a single idea. He means 'the Holy Spirit, which is like a fire.' This divine fire is the very form in which the exalted Christ later manifested himself to the apostles.

Capnion: It is very pleasing, this recitation of yours, because it agrees with our religion. I have never received anything with greater pleasure than your arrangement of these divine names. Contrary to the opinion of many theologians, you have established not EHYEH, but HU as first, so the order is: HU, EHYEH, ETH. It's as if one were to speak audaciously about the ineffable unity of the Trinity: a speaking fire, just as we speak of three aspects—substance, virtue, operation—in one individual. It is like how Orpheus arranged his hymns with collected names.

Sidonius: Or take Homer's gods: Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite. Regarding Jupiter, he writes: “Jupiter, shrouding the heavens in clouds and ruling from his sacred tree.” Regarding Athena, he says: 'If only wisdom-giving Minerva would grant me her beauty.' We call Athena the goddess of profound counsel and great wisdom because she was born from Jove's head, springing directly from his brain. This is the same divine being you Hebrews refer to as 'Hochma' (Wisdom). About Aphrodite: The father of gods said to her, “Not the rule of war, daughter, is left for you, but to inflame the gods with soft embrace.” About this Ternary, I could sing that Virgilian, or rather Pythagorean, verse: “God rejoices in the odd number.” I seem to see that you have comprehended the whole divine majesty in a supereminent triad. Hence, perhaps, that which creates, that which seizes the

created, and that which perfects the seized. But why do I delay Baruchias? Come, if you have anything further.

Baruchias: I have only a few more things I diligently memorized, but nothing more on this class of names I've just recounted. I believe no other name remains besides these three: HU, EHYEH, ETH. These alone signify the essence of God, even if no world existed. For then God would remain entirely self-identical; his essential being would exist fully, and he would possess a fiery essence, not like elemental or celestial fire, but in Himself, ineffably shining. All other fires are but shadow and darkness in comparison. The Chaldean writings indicate this, calling even the archetypal world a shadow and idol compared to the divine light.

But I know not what Sidonius whispered about 'Hochma,' as if it were among the names of God's essence. I confess that nothing can be added to God, nor does anything external cohere to Him, for nothing is simpler or more one. Yet, we cry out with David, “You have made all things in wisdom.” Therefore, before all things, wisdom was with God. If it was not outside God, it must have been the essence of God. I think Sidonius feared I would omit 'Hochma' (wisdom) through negligence.

But if you meditate that God is nothing other than His essence, it's not difficult to see how we distribute names signifying God. Since we know divinity imperfectly, we name it imperfectly. We dispose divinely revealed names according to our intelligence. Some signify God in Himself, stripped of all association with creation: as the supersubstantial fire (ETH); as the very being (EHYEH), embracing all time; as the very same (HU), mixed with no otherness. These three designate the pure nature of God's substance to our feeble understanding.

But 'wisdom' is different. We see wisdom in men, so we attribute it similarly to God. The name 'Hochma' is not the least among the names signifying God, not in a direct ('Cataphatic') way, but

in a negative ('Apophatic') way, naming God from the things around Him. Scripture indicates this: “For what is of God, is wisdom to man.”

Thus, wisdom itself in Proverbs unfolds a mystery: 'The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His creative work, before any of His deeds of old. I was formed in the most ancient times, at the very first, before the earth existed. When there were no watery depths, I was already conceived. Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth.” The text then continues: “And I AM (EHYEH) was with him as a master artisan; and I AM was his delight day after day.” A more elegant rendering of this, which you use, reads: “I was beside him as a skilled craftsman, and I was his delight continually, rejoicing before him always.”

You see the matter clearly here: the wisdom of God is a kind of emanation, produced before the world was made, born from the contemplation of future things in the mind of God. Through it, all things were made. It is as if it were the very EHYEH of the first being, a concomitant habit and industry. I speak in human terms due to our weakness. In this matter, we understand things we cannot utter. I think wisdom was a living substance and an operating energy, providing for the universe. Although the holy opinion is that God Himself is this wisdom, my mind compels me to understand it as a distinct property of God, separate from His naked immanence in Himself.

Therefore, 'Hochma' belongs to those things which accompany God's abyssal closure in Himself, just like the 'fortitude' of God. As Jeremiah says of the creator: “He made the earth in His fortitude, and prepared the globe in His wisdom, and in His understanding stretched out the heavens.”

Here is another religious name. The Hebrews place it after the 'crown' and 'wisdom' among the ten numerations (Sefirot) they attribute to God. The first is the inaccessible abyss of divinity, the infinite power over all that is and is not. They call it 'Kether' (Crown). This diadem, hanging from

the whole divinity, penetrates the kingdom. The other nine are like coverings of God. When the blessed mind touches them, God responds, “Someone has touched me; for I felt power going out from me.” These nine are like the objects of enjoyment for the nine hierarchies of the blessed.

About 'Hochma' (Wisdom) and 'Binah' (Understanding), Solomon says, “Blessed is the man who has found wisdom, and who abounds in understanding.” And in Job, Elihu says, “It is the spirit in men, and the inspiration of God Almighty that gives them understanding.”

About Netzach (Victory), Samuel wrote, “The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment.”

After this, King David, speaking about the temple, placed another name near the end of his book: “For you, O Lord, are magnificence and power and glory and victory and 'Hod," which is translated as 'praise' or 'confession.'

The same divine nature is revealed in the 104th Psalm, where a herald proclaims God with these words: “You are clothed with Hod and beauty,” wrapped in light as in a garment.

Following this "confession" of praise and glory is another holy and venerable name, renowned and powerful, which places Tiferet so strongly in the center of the ten Sephirot. As it says in the book you call Chronicles: “Therefore we, your people, will confess to you; and we praise your renowned name Tiferet.” The 96th Psalm treats both: “Hod and beauty are in his presence; strength and Tiferet are in his works.” You can see the power of this name in Psalm 89: “For Tiferet of virtue and his valor is yours, O God.” And in Isaiah 63: “Thus you have led your people, to make for yourself a name of Tiferet.”

But after all these, let us speak of the majestic girdle of God's excellence, which He Himself used, together with the other principal attributes, in creating the world. It is the name of a girdle and the

ornament of all that is right. About which Psalm 65 sings: “Hear us, O God our savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the distant sea; You who prepare the mountains in Your strength, being girded with power.”

Therefore, when such majesty goes forth from its hidden place, adorned with the diadem (Kether), wisdom (Hochma), understanding (Binah), victory (Netzach), proclamation (Hod), and beauty (Tiferet), all of which He girds Himself with by His own power, what else is this but a King proceeding into His kingdom? For our King is before the ages; He is the God of virtues and the King of glory; the great King over all gods; the King of all the earth; He will reign forever. Therefore, they sing that collective name Malkhut (Kingdom), by which the luminous path of this illustrious kingdom is seen, an eternal rule that will never end. As it is written: “Your kingdom is a kingdom of all ages.”

Next come two insignia of the king: the scepter and the sword, that is, mercy and fear. The name of the former is Hesed (Mercy). The royal prophet David mentions it, saying: “Lord, your mercy is in heaven.” And not only there, but above the heavens, as in the 107th Psalm. Moses, in his divine prayer to the highest creator, among the most sacred appeals, did not hesitate to utter this devotedly holy name, saying: “Lord Tetragrammaton, God merciful and clement, patient and of much mercy,” which is Hesed.

Lastly comes the beginning of divine worship and perfect religion. If we trace the properties of contemplation back to the very source of majesty, this actually comes last for us. But when we look from ourselves toward the attributes of the supreme deity, it rightly holds the first place due to our partial understanding, and is called Pachad, that is, Fear. Hence, the trinal verse is commonly sung: “Fear first made gods in the world.” Many noble grammarians even derived the word 'gods' (theoi in Greek) from 'fear' (deos).

However, this is not the kind of fear that makes the guilty dread punishment. That kind of fear is the domain of Furies, malicious spirits, and vengeful ghosts—the same tormented souls who cry out in Virgil's underworld, “Whoever we are, we suffer our own Manes.” This is not the divine and wholesome fear that comes from God. Rather, it is a tormenting frenzy, the 'worm of a guilty conscience' that gnaws away daily, corroding and burning a wicked mind and soul. Cicero discussed this excellently against Piso: “Do not think that accursed men are terrified by the gods, as you see on the stage; each one's own crime, his own wickedness, drives him from sanity. These are the Furies of the impious.”

But Pachad is an internal fear, more excellent than love. A noble philosopher of our age rightly said that just as external fear is inferior to love, so internal fear is superior to love. You yourselves understand this to be true; you will recognize even better how sanctified, venerable, and divine this name is—a spirit breathed upon men; consecrated, efficacious, and the firmest sacrament of religion.

If you doubt this, read the holy scriptures about the patriarch Jacob. For Jacob swore by the Pachad of his father Isaac. And to his father-in-law he said: “Unless the God of my father Abraham and the Pachad of Isaac had been with me, you would now have sent me away naked.”

You have now heard briefly about the ineffable secrets and the most observant names: the ten derived emanations (Sefirot), their praise, honors, glory, and dignities. These are the consecrated names, chosen from the most sacred letters, which signify the modes of the divine essence.

For us, therefore, the whole Elohim (God) has gone forth into the universe with so many ornaments and garments surrounding Him. This is why Elohim, a plural word, names the one God.

But since we were discussing the words of God's essence, I must briefly state the truth: none of the three names we explained (HU, EHYEH, ETH), in designating God's unique essence, ignores created things. Each one, with its own ornament and beauty, in some way also measures and names a creature dependent on God.

Starting from the highest, HU (The Same): whatever is self-contained, has its own proper nature, an incommunicable place, a distinct mark of difference, and a separated state—that can be said to be ‘the same itself.’

Regarding EHYEH (Being), we see how widely it communicates itself to all created things. Not only what stands by its own substance, but anything that clings to existence can be said ‘to be.’ All things that depend on the First can be said ‘to be.’

And what shall we say about ETH (Fire)? Nothing is so universally present as its spark. Heraclitus taught that all things were generated from fire. Therefore, it presents itself to our intellect as an excellent, adorable name for the supersubstantial deity.

Beyond these three, there is one other, primary, and first name by which God can be called. It is called among the Greeks the 'Tetragrammaton Anecphoniton,' that is, the ineffable name of four letters. This name, which accomplishes all things, does not name anything from its own work; it calls nothing; it affects nothing with its own word. Translators, finding no equal word for it, called it 'Lord' in Latin, on account of God's supereminent dominion.

The letters themselves form no common syllable. They are simple vowels, familiar to an incomprehensible voice: I, U. The Chaldeans depict it with only four rightly ordered points, to avoid profaning these most holy characters, written by the finger of God, through daily mortal use. The Hebrews have adopted this custom, especially when writing it. They either don't write the four

letters fully or use the Chaldean figure. Some use three points with a connected semicircle, and others different symbols. All this was invented out of reverence, lest by frequent handling, so great a majesty be despised.

Now you have received the most secret signs: The name Tetragrammaton, found by no man, handed down by God alone. A holy and honorable name. The one name by which alone God is to be blessed. The most powerful name, by which the heavens stand, the infernals observe, and all nature kisses; which, when imbibed by devoted worshippers, is said to grant wonderful commands to human faculty.

This name was divinely known to our first parents soon after they received the breath of life. For Eve said about her firstborn: “I have possessed a man through the Tetragrammaton.” The holy text contains this, which had not been uttered before it was divinely given. The name was then passed down through the righteous line of Seth, who was formed in God's image. He began to be invoked by the name Tetragrammaton, unlike the unjust race of Cain. Seth, a cultivator of divinity, invoked God's name with his family.

Some teach that only Enos, Seth's grandson, first began this invocation, perhaps due to a Hebrew error. They misread an adverb of time ('then') as a pronoun ('he'), changing the meaning from "then he began to call" to "this one began to call." But from the sacred letters and Chaldean exposition, you understand this is not so.

This most holy name was passed down by hereditary right through the line of Seth, with its diligent religion and faith, all the way to Abraham. When Abraham went to Canaan, he built an altar and invoked the name Tetragrammaton. God later appeared to him, saying, “I am the Tetragrammaton who led you out from Ur.” His son Isaac also built an altar and invoked this name. And Jacob,

when he lay down in Haran, saw God in a dream and heard, “I am the Tetragrammaton, the God of Abraham and Isaac.” When he awoke, he said, “Indeed, the Tetragrammaton is in this place.” When he wrestled with God and asked His name, God responded, “Why do you ask my name?” indicating he already possessed the knowledge.

Then Capnion says: With your permission, I must interrupt. You seem to be led by your copious speech into a difficult point. Don't you remember that God said to Moses: “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, and my name Tetragrammaton I did not make known to them”? You dare to teach that they knew this occult name, handed down from Eve? If so, the great and serious theologians would not have taught us that it was first revealed to Moses, unknown to the fathers before him, and not invented by Eve.

Baruchias: You speak truly, but you conclude falsely. You will permit me to use a logical argument. Eve prophesied this name, as scripture attests. But that she invented it, fashioned it, or instituted it as a new human device, this I would not agree with. As I said, it was divinely known to the first parents. The prophet Isaiah confirms this: “You are the Tetragrammaton our father; our redeemer; from eternity is your name.” So, the name existed before our earthly fathers.

The words of God to Moses, that He appeared to the ancestors as God Almighty and did not 'make known' His name Tetragrammaton, require investigation. How do we resolve this?

Let me use an analogy. Who, hearing Ezekiel speak of precious stones, doesn't remember seeing one? Who is the merchant who doesn't know a Sardius, Topaz, Jasper, Ruby, Onyx, Beryl, Sapphire, Carbuncle, or Emerald? We all know the names and shapes of many plants and flowers. A rustic man knows Coral from Emerald. But only an expert physicist or an experienced doctor

knows their *virtues and powers*—that an Emerald averts epilepsy, or Coral relieves stomach pain, and how to use them.

Thus, whoever knows a gem only by name and sight cannot be said to know its property and power until it is demonstrated through operation. This is how God spoke to Moses. He performed miracles for my ancestors in His own omnipotence. But when liberating the Israelites, He chose to delegate His wonderful power to men through the occult virtue of this name, Tetragrammaton, which had never been *revealed in this way* to any mortal before. By a singular pact, He enclosed the energy of His majesty in a word, a power hidden from the patriarchs until Moses's time.

So, there are three aspects: the *name*, its *signification*, and the *pact* or divine concession of its power. The name elevates the mind. The signification adheres to the elevated mind. Our ancestors knew these two—the name and its meaning. They invoked God by it, and He was propitious to them. But the third aspect, the delegated power itself, was *made known* to Moses and not to the fathers.

The Hebrew text supports this. Where we read ‘I did not indicate,’ the Hebrew 'Nodaethi' means 'I did not make known.' God did not *make known* His name Tetragrammaton from the earlier age in the sense of revealing the great things hidden within it, committed to human use. Now, God has set this name above all others as wonderful, great, and terrible, known from the miracles done by God *through man*. As Isaiah says: “Tetragrammaton, you are my God... for you have done wonderful things.” To *know* the name Tetragrammaton is to know not just the word, but its occult pronunciation, its hidden virtue, and the signs and miracles that follow.

All of this will be made clearer by reading the fourth chapter of Exodus and the very words God spoke to Moses. The Lord says: "I will lead you out from your slavery in Egypt. I will free you

from your servitude and redeem you with mighty power and acts of supreme judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD (the Tetragrammaton) your God." The text says, "You will know... the Tetragrammaton." But when will this happen? It will happen "When I lead you out." And how will He lead them out? "With mighty power." This points to the miracles. The Peripatetic philosophers would call this kind of knowledge "a posteriori"—that is, knowledge that comes after and from experiencing the effects (the signs and miracles). This is how faith is born. But "You will know"—by what capacity can our weak human nature comprehend this? It will be "By great judgments." For to judge and to pass sentence belongs to God. The entire nation must simply obey, without needing prior preparation. This is the ground for hope. And "You will know"—but what will be the manner of this knowing? It will be through "the covenant of God with man": "That I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God." This is the bond of love. This is not a common contract bound by external force, but a necessary new pact struck with God, founded upon the power of His name, the Tetragrammaton, for those who desire its virtue to work within them. Indeed, the Lord of the universe had already spoken to Moses about a future covenant with the Jewish people, saying, "You have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt." This shows they were already God's people in a general sense. So, what is new when God now says, "I will take you as my own people"? It is this new, intimate partnership—this pasture, this new spiritual union—which contemplative souls enter into with God at a specific moment, formally establishing a pact sealed by the power of the Tetragrammaton.

This is what the divine messenger (the Tetragrammaton) said to Manoah when he asked for His name: “Why do you ask my name?” Yet, in this case, the response itself was the revelation. The very fact that He withheld His name in this way allowed Manoah to understand who He was. Acting on this recognition, Manoah made a burnt offering, a ritual which, as you find in authors

like Homer, signified the formal sealing of a covenant. The scripture then confirms his understanding: “He placed the offering on the rock, a sacrifice to the Tetragrammaton, who works wonders.’ This is why Manoah then said to his wife in terror, “We are doomed to die, for we have seen God!” His fear was not of seeing an angel; the patriarchs had often conversed with angels without such dread. His terror came from remembering God's words to Moses: 'No one can see me and live.' He feared he had seen the full presence of God Himself, and only later was he comforted and assured by his wife. This stands in clear contrast to the patriarch Jacob's experience. When Jacob wrestled with the divine being and asked his name, the being also responded, “Why do you ask my name?” but the conversation ended there. The text does not add the phrase 'which is wonderful,' nor was a miraculous sign given. For Manoah, however, because he had just witnessed the miracle of the offering being consumed by fire, the divine response, though verbally similar to Jacob's, carried the implicit power of the 'wonderful' name, allowing him to identify the Tetragrammaton. This explains the verse: “My name is Peli” (meaning 'wonderful'). However, it's crucial to distinguish this from the 'wonderful' in Psalm 8: “O Lord our Lord, how Adir (admirable) is your name in all the earth.”

You have the origin of this great name, its figure, its signification, and its virtue, which befits only the best and greatest God. It is a name of excellent greatness (Joshua), called 'Terrible' (Deuteronomy), 'Good,' 'honorable,' 'holy,' 'praiseworthy,' 'eternal,' 'beatific' (Psalms), 'Excellent,' 'ancient,' 'from eternity' (Isaiah), 'Invoked upon us' (Jeremiah), 'Gone forth among the nations' (Ezekiel), 'Blessed' (Daniel), and 'Great among the nations from the rising to the setting of the sun' (Malachi).

I will deliberately omit the petty grammatical questions with which theologians have entangled themselves. Only that celebrated and most powerful promise remains, hidden in the abyss of

secrets. If this name can be uttered, it is not ineffable; if it cannot be uttered, it is not a name. What, therefore, shall we do? Shall we deny it is a name, against so much testimony? Shall we deny it is ineffable, which all Greeks and Latins say it is? Solomon says in Proverbs: “Who has gathered the winds?... What is his name, and what is the name of his son, if you know?” As if to say: “You would utter the very name if you knew, and express what is ineffable.”

I will cite to Sidonius your Hermes Trismegistus—that is, the 'thrice-greatest'—from the dialogue of Asclepius. “For I do not believe that the creator of all majesty and the father and lord of all things can be named by a single name, even one that is composed of many.” But I speak of the God of our fathers: not the god of the common people, not of the poets, not of the philosophers, not of the pagans, but the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, who imposed a proper name upon a nature that was unknown and unnameable.

God is the institutor of the impossible pronunciation. He taught Moses to pronounce the unutterable name when Moses complained about his inept tongue.

The pronunciation known to us from that place is comprehended in three parts under one period. I do not wish to go beyond the limits of these secrets by stating them plainly.

Since, as Plato says, a name is an imitation of essence, we, like painters, use multiple parts to present what we wish to imitate. To understand its structure, we first resolve it into its parts (syllables, letters, their properties), then build it back up. The complex word signifies the thing.

Our ancestors, supported by divine study, grasped the fullest exposition of this name's grace and handed it down as the 'Shemhamphoras.' By this most secret foundation, I know they accomplished what nature itself was unable to do.

Lest you lack this, I will complete it in few words. The four letters of the Lord is like a ladder fixed on earth with its top touching heaven. Jacob lies asleep at its base. Angels ascend and descend. Jacob is assured by a promise; awaking, he affirms the Lord is in the place; he trembles, fears, sacrifices, and makes a vow.

Let us fill this ladder with steps. The 'Shemhamphoras' is the praise of God. The steps of the ladder are divided according to His praises. In Hebrew, praises are 'Tehillim,' which is also the name of the book of Psalms. Therefore, the 'Shemhamphoras' is the revealed exposition of the divine name from the book of Psalms. Each verse marks one step of the ladder, and these steps hold sacred characters. From these, the Spirit of God suggests, one collected and observable seal of the highest is constituted, formed by three letters. Within this is said to be enclosed the angel of God bearing the majesty of the divine name. This is the angel who ascended and descended. In this process, the virtues resolved the august name and finally restored it with angelic syllables. The resolution does not cease to be the name, nor is the restored name something different, just as the sun's rays are not separate from the sun itself. As the most contemplative Greek philosopher says: “What the sun is to the sensible world, God is to the intelligible world.”

This is the psalmody of seventy-two verses. I will pronounce it in Latin according to your church's custom and will show the individual holy seals with my finger; pay diligent attention with your mind. Where the four-letter name, the Tetragrammaton, is placed, I will, in the ancient manner, use the interpretation 'Adonai' (Lord) instead.

Baruchias begins to recite a series of verses from the Psalms:

- You, Lord, are my protector; you are my glory, the one who lifts up my head.
- Do not be far from me, O Lord; O my help, hasten to my aid!

- I will say to the Lord, "You are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
- Turn, O Lord, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
- Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds!
- The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
- Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.
- Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.
- The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation.
- Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
- For the Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.
- The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.
- O Lord, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you.
- O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
- Judge me, O Lord, according to your righteousness, and let not my enemies rejoice over me.
- I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

- I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.
- But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
- The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.
- The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.
- I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
- With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O Lord! I will keep your statutes.
- Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; preserve me from violent men.
- Do not be far from me, O God; O my God, make haste to help me!
- Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life.
- For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
- I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you.
- For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.
- The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath.
- Let Israel hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.
- I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.
- I love the habitation of your house, and the place where your glory dwells.
- Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

- For you are my hope, O Lord God, my confidence from my youth.
- The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer.
- Why do you cast me off, O Lord? Why do you hide your face from me?
- Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.
- The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
- O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you!
- Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules.
- When I thought, "My foot slips," your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up.
- The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.
- How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!
- He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and merciful.
- Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.
- The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- Let the glory of the Lord endure forever; let the Lord rejoice in his works.
- I will give thanks to the Lord according to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.
- I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.
- The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

- But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your renown endures to all generations.
- The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.
- You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.
- How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
- From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!
- The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.
- Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!
- I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad.
- Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
- Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love.
- Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!
- Do not forsake me, O Lord! O my God, be not far from me!
- Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!
- The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

- Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

Baruchias continued: Do not let the pronunciation of this name disturb us or lead us to think that the collection of these verses is a random, human invention, and not by divine fate. Some, like Plutarch, wrote that Homer's songs were not originally in their current order but were scattered and later arranged by grammarians like Peisistratus and Aristarchus. Some of your most learned men, like Bishop Hilary, have judged similarly about the Psalms. Hilary says: “It should not be ignored that among the Hebrews the Psalms were originally written without numbered order. That they are first, second, third, or fiftieth is not pre-noted; they were mixed together without any prescribed order. As ancient traditions relate, Ezra collected them, uncomposed and dispersed, into one volume.”

Since the tradition of the Shemhamphorash predates the seventy-two interpreters who are said to have established the Psalms' numbered order, you can be sure these verses, conceived by divine inspiration, were not made to serve a human order. Rather, by their own divine number—innumerably numerable and infinitely finite—they subsist, and in them, the numbers of the powerful name, Tetragrammaton, are made known to the wise.

Then Sidonius said: You have excellently shown with your finger what you promised. But I do not fully understand the number of its letters, to which the seventy-two are referred, nor the 'quaternion' (the four letters) which this celebrated name consists of, called Tetragrammaton. I find that the most ancient philosophers always held this in greater esteem than any other religious secret. Especially Pythagoras and his followers, who called what you call Tetragrammaton by the name 'Tetractys,' which they preferred to all gods and original virtues, describing it as the preeminent natural fountain flowing into our souls. Their 'Golden Verses' use it as an oath:

“By him who bestowed the Tetractys to our soul which is the fount and root of ever-flowing nature.”

Other outstanding poets have imitated this, distinguishing chaos into four elements, the heaven into four seasons, the air into four winds (Eurus, Zephyrus, Auster, Boreas), and the earth into four regions. They even divided humanity into four parts: flesh, spirit, manes, and shadow, as Ovid writes. They praised the Stoic life for its four virtues. Mathematicians place the first solid demonstration in the quaternary. Physicists place the judicial powers in the four faculties: intellect, reason, opinion, sense. Arithmeticians call the number one a 'tetragon' in potential, which becomes a tetragonal number when actualized. The first four numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) perfectly consummate the number ten. This makes it easier to believe in those ten Sephiroth you introduced.

This same number four contains all musical harmony and indeed gathers the whole of mathematics: point, line, plane, and body. It completes physics, which teaches of seminal nature: first the natural pullulation, second the adolescent form, third the composite. Finally, it insinuates the whole of metaphysics: essence, virtue, and action. This triple nature is wonderfully explicated into a quaternity from the principle of the point: 1. the point (essence), 2. the line (pullulation, being), 3. the plane (form, virtue), 4. the body (composite, action). These seem to me to be the twelve shining stones you recited before, which Moses arranged in groups of four.

Therefore, this divine quaternity shines forth in every part of the universe. In the supernals (as in Orphic theology), the Muse, Dionysius, Apollo, and Venus send down divine attractions into our minds. In the celestials, there are four triplicities (of the zodiac). Under heaven, four seasons. Under time, four qualities. Under qualities, four elements. Under elements: substance, quality, quantity, motion. Under substance: corporeal, vegetative, sensitive, intelligent. Under quantity:

point, length, breadth, depth. Under quality: hot, cold, dry, humid. Under motion: ascending, descending, progressing, circular.

We have spoken of supercelestial, eternal, temporal, and mixed things. Let's see how the human soul allies itself with the quaternity. Our soul ascends to the highest through four steps in the spirit itself: through sense, imagination, fantasy, and intelligence.

You see, therefore, that the nature of the universe consists in quaternity. The maker of all things would not have made it this way unless there were in Himself a certain idea of the quaternion before He began creating. This is why the Spartans depicted the highest god with four ears, because the highest quaternity, the Tetractys, has an emanation found in angels through form, in rational souls through true participation, in irrational animals through imagination, and in corporeal figures through impression. The accustomed rain of this same principle always flows down from the high to the low, watering the universe.

Baruchias: I gladly hear, Sidonius, what you apply with your discipline. You refer all things correctly to the rule. I think that famous river which goes forth from the place of pleasure to irrigate paradise with a fourfold head is this principle. Orpheus and Homer call it Oceanus, the origin of divine and human things: First, always existing; Second, flowing in the generation of the gods; Third, irrigating earthly things; Fourth, distilling into every fluid nature. This is that river Chobar, by which Ezekiel, taken by the hand, saw the likeness of four living creatures, each with four faces. In the same vision, four cherubim with four wheels, a wheel within a wheel. This is the great sea in Daniel's vision, where four winds fought and four great beasts ascended. They call its divinity Neptune of the winds, who drives a four-horsed chariot in the Orphic hymns.

Therefore, the Tetragrammaton was a mystery to the most ancient wise men, even Gentiles. Though not publicly initiated, they knew of it privately. Handing down the best disciplines through enigmas, they instituted skilled artificers to secretly comprehend the whole universe and form it into one image, so this highest name would not be despised by common use. This sacred image they called 'hieroglyphic,' and its sculptors 'hieroglyphists.' It was of this mode: First, an eye; Second, a rod; Third, a shield; Fourth, a serpent. These are visible even to the profane. But the numbers themselves are simpler and more formal, and we think them more fitting for approaching divine things.

This celebrated name is so desired by us philosophers because it embraces both the geometric sacraments of figures and the arithmetic sacraments of number forms. To perform the duty of a mathematician, I will speak correctly: the process is One, Impart, Total, Reduction.

Nothing is prior to the infinite, the one, the point; it is the principle of all things. From the one down to the point, all things are; beyond the one and the point, there is nothing. This, therefore, is the end of all things.

You now hold the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, 'Yod'. It represents the figure of a point, means 'principle,' designates the number ten (the end of number), and implicitly penetrates all numbers because it represents unity. Unity is the common measure of all numbers. As arithmeticians write, it holds the place of a point, which is the principle of intervals but has no interval itself. Unity multiplied by itself always remains one. It is always the same, unchangeable substance, the chief of order, the producer of form. It is the principle, communication, and end of all things; above number, without division. It most conveniently demonstrates the author of the world to our weak eyes.

As the divine Dionysius the Areopagite writes about being: “In the monad (unity) every number exists uniformly, and unity has every number in itself uniquely... But as much as something has proceeded from the monad, so much it differs and multiplies.”

We have spoken about immanence; let us speak about process. Just as the motion of a point makes a line, the motion of a line makes a plane, so the motion of unity creates the 'other,' and otherness creates the binary. According to Pythagoras and Boethius, 'the other' is ascribed to the binary. 'Alter' is said only of two. The binary indicates a composition, an accumulation of unities, and implies material proportion, which cannot exist without form.

The odd number, especially the ternary (three), is most proper to divine things, as Virgil sang: “God rejoices in the odd number.” Everything that flows forth from God is 'other' than Him and belongs to the first multitude. Yet, to have being, it must be converted back to God, whose sign is the odd number. Every procession is affected through similitude to the first.

Therefore, the angelic nature is signified by an odd number. By number, because it is a multitude progressed from one. By odd, because it is nearest to God. The angels are a small portion of God. Where a superior nature touches an inferior, the lowest grade of the superior touches the highest of the inferior. But when it comes to the summit (unity), the highest of the inferior aspires to the whole condition of unity. The whole condition of unity is to be the same, always like itself and immutable, in which only the odd number greatly participates. The half of any even number is a number, but not so for an odd number. That which can be divided into two equal parts is disjoined. So, oddness is more cognate to God, and evenness more dissimilar. Therefore, the angelic nature was designated by an odd number.

But since only God admits no multitude in Himself, while other things are a coagulation of finite things confirmed from act and power, the first deity was to be celebrated by a mark consisting of both even and odd number. Even, so that it might *be something*. Odd, so that it might be that which *flowed out* and *flowed back*. For 'to be' and 'that which is' are diverse.

From the first binary (2) and the first ternary (3) consists the quinary (5). This, produced from the supreme light, is demonstrated by the sacred character 'He'. Mathematicians hand it down as the first of numbering; Hebrew grammarians as the spirit of pronunciation and the hypostasis of essence. Solomon skillfully painted this for unlearned eyes: he made two cherubim over the ark, each with a wing of five cubits, as images of the supercelestial essence next to God.

I wish to briefly explain the third character of this name, 'Vav'. Although it is a conjunction, it also changes verb tenses, and in mathematics signifies the senary number (6). Most aptly, it is the mark of heaven and earth, the conjunction of all from matter and form. 'Vav' connects parts of speech, hence it is a conjunction. It changes tenses in verbs, just as things change in time. As Ecclesiastes says, "'What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done." All corporeal things are subject to the mutation of time.

Let me pass to Pythagorean mysteries. The ancient 'hieroglyphists' sculpted the nature of the universe in one image containing an eye, a rod, a shield, and a serpent. You see the order: after the eye (the point) and the rod (the line), the plane follows; then the shield of the hexagon (the solid body). A solid is enclosed by six angles due to length (before/after), breadth (left/right), and height (up/down). This senary is inseparable from the nature of solids. So, after 'Yod' (1) and 'He' (2 & 3), 'Vav' (6) follows. This number arises from the multiplication of the preceding numbers (1x2x3=6), making it congruent with material things, which are multiplied by mutual connection.

Furthermore, the senary number is perfect. In the whole sequence from one to ten, it is the only number where the sum of its parts equals the whole. Its half is 3, its third is 2, and its sixth is 1 (3+2+1=6). Other numbers lack this perfection. The half of eight is 4, its fourth is 2, its eighth is 1 (4+2+1=7, which is less than 8). Thus, the senary alone designates this whole and perfect world.

We can fortify this with sacred letters. In the holy scriptures, while many generations are recited, the word 'generations' (Tholedoth) is written with the letter 'Vav' only once: “These are the generations of heaven and earth.” This letter is omitted in all other genealogies, except one—the genealogy of Christ in Ruth: “These are the generations of Phares,” a more perfect progeny. Therefore, this third letter 'Vav' reminds us by the number six that the whole universe is perfect, because on the sixth day God saw all He made was very good, and heaven and earth were finished.

It remains to speak of the fourth letter. After immaterial substances (like angels) and material substances (bodies), there are forms that, while in matter, are also separated from bodies and matter. To this genus belongs the rational soul, which has a fiery vigor and celestial origin, though weighed down by the body. While it shares a congress with the angelic nature, it is posterior because it is attached to corruptible things.

As the Psalmist says, God has diminished man “a little less than the angels.” I will make this most pleasing to you, my wearied friends, and finish briefly.

Plato, in the *Timaeus*, says God first created fire, then earth. These two adverse elements could not cohere without a third, a medium communicating with both the superior and inferior. Since there are archetypal fiery lights and corporeal torches, a substance was needed to embrace the material mass—one that neither depended on matter nor existed wholly without it. This medium is the human soul, which participates in both worlds.

Hermes Trismegistus says: “O Asclepius, a great miracle is man... For he passes into the nature of God... He knows the race of demons... He despises the part of human nature in himself, conscious of the divinity of the other part... He, joined by cognate divinity to the gods, binds all things with the bond of charity.” Thus, man is placed in the happy place of mediety, loving what is within him and loved by the superiors.

The rational soul is the medium between the invisible and visible world. For this reason, it could be designated by no other mark than the quinary number (5). This last letter is also 'He', the just medium of the whole denary numeration. If you gather the numbers around five (4+6, 3+7, 2+8, 1+9), you always get ten, of which five is the half. The quinaries alone are the medium.

The angelic world, being more absolute and purer, is shown by the prior 'He' in a more eminent place. The posterior 'He' is the human mind, affixed to the body. But because it does not cease with the body and, if not captivated by alien allurements, returns to a supercelestial habitation, I have named this 'reduction.'

Zoroaster said: “You must ascend to the very light and to the rays of the Father, whence the soul was sent to you.” Pythagoras handed down: “When, leaving the body, you will pass freely into the ether, and you will be an immortal god.”

This is the last 'He'—the reduction of man to divinity. This is the end, the term, the metaphysical limit and perfection of this sacred, adorable, powerful, admirable name. This is the fourth letter. In Daniel, the appearance of the fourth is like a son of God. For God gave men the power to become sons of God. This last 'He' is the eagle in Ezekiel's vision, which went straight and did not turn back.

By the force of this letter, Abraham, a hundred years old, and Sarah, ninety, begot a seed beyond nature's laws. On account of this, he was named Abraham, having been Abram before. Why use many words? All our happiness is expressed by this fourth character, by which the beginning (Alpha) is united with the end (Omega), and the earthly is united with the heavenly. By it, we place what we wish, and we wish what is above us.

This is most abundantly confirmed by the letter 'He'. For after solicitude, we interpret it as beatitude.

We have treated, O best of men, in a rather long speech, the names which seem to signify the very essence of God. You yourselves can learn from Dionysius the Areopagite and Jerome the rest of the names, which signify either the virtue of God, his operation, or our relationship with him. There are not a few of these, and they are confirmed by other Greek and Latin authors. But they are expounded by our writers in this way:

Such is the name 'Ish', which means both 'man' and 'God'. In the book of Genesis, Jacob is recorded to have wrestled with a being referred to by this name, and it follows: “You shall not be called Jacob, but Israel; because you have prevailed with God (Elohim) and with men.”

So also is the word 'Na', which we use in times of trouble and distress of the mind. As Moses says in Numbers: “*Dimitre Na peccati populi tui*,” which you interpret as: “Forgive, I pray, the sin of your people.” And in the 118th Psalm: “*A na domine salvifica na. A na domine fortunare fac na*,’ which you more elegantly render: “O Lord, save me; O Lord, cause me to prosper well.”

You also read 'Jah' in Hallelujah, and 'Sabaoth' in sacrifices, and 'Adonai' in Exodus, and 'El' in Immanuel, and 'Shaddai' which is 'Sadai'. And before the sun, his name is 'Jainon,' which you

translate as: 'His name remains.' There is also 'Elyon' and very many others not commonly used, such as 'Macom' and 'Caphu'.

Furthermore, the generic names of angels are very many: such as 'Hashmalim', 'Hauch', 'Ophanim', 'Tarshishim', and the rest. And there are many private names for individual angels: 'Uriel', 'Azariel', 'Zuriel', 'Abir', 'Metatron', and others of that family.

You have now heard, finally, what the name of the maker of the world is, and my account of it has been brief. There are other names of that kind and many other things which I would both set forth and explain, no matter how much simpler they might be than these. But now the sun has set, and you are wearied by listening. I delegate the other parts to Capnion for tomorrow. Now, let us go in from here to dinner.

Then Sidonius said: "So be it."

And Capnion: "So be it."

For them, a splendid feast awaited.

THE SECOND BOOK OF ON THE WONDER-WORKING WORD ENDS.

BOOK III

PREFACE BY JOHANNES REUCHLIN TO THE THIRD BOOK

The third day dawns, venerable Prelate. Now that the sacred names from the ancient philosophy of the Greeks and Hebrews have been expounded, Capnion—a Pforzheimer by nation, a Christian by profession—must at last be heard in a continuous declamation. Before it begins, however, Sidonius, again seized with a great zeal for investigation, speaks before the others:

THE THIRD BOOK BEGINS

Sidonius said: It seemed to me, my Capnion, that the very walls in this bedroom were shaking last night due to those portentous words which Baruchias recited to us in his speech yesterday. My mind, from its keen contemplation, must have comprehended the unheard-of novelty of such words as I neared sleep, and drawn me into diverse directions, so that my imagination fabricated a kind of vision. Or perhaps, as he thinks (and I do not greatly reject it), those symbols of divinity, the heavenly troops, could easily have been present. For no one, according to Homer, remains in his seat when Jove is moved. But come, Capnion, it is now time for the wonder-working word, lest you frustrate our hope.

Capnion said: Do you think anything was left untouched yesterday by Baruchias that I might be able to add to today? He, full of such a variety of names, poured out all the instruments, stipends, and legions of the celestial hosts.

And Sidonius responded: I truly think so. For he strongly affirmed that none of the words he discussed has the inherent force and power to override the common course of nature, nor could the words of other Gentile traditions have done so.

Then Baruchias said: What is the point, Sidonius? Capnion, see that you fulfill your promise. Explain that certain word by which miracles are made, and its infallible rite, and no longer hold us in suspense.

Then Capnion said: Since you press me with such freedom, I will do not as much as you perhaps desire, but what I am able. I think it is established that our ancestors had some name or word by which they performed portents and miracles. A few things remain which our friendship forbids me

to deny you. If I name the word itself and hand down the rite for using it, I will have explained my duty sufficiently.

All these things would be ready; yet the matter itself seemed to require a different approach. Recall the first day of our disputation, when we agreed upon a singular opinion that sits profoundly in our judgment: that a sempiternal wisdom, a perpetual science, has come to men through the correct faith, founded not on human commentaries but wholly on divine revelation.

From this must be sought the origin of the world and all things which proceed from God. As Paul of Tarsus says to the Hebrews: “By faith we understand the worlds were fashioned by the word of God, so that from invisible things, visible things might be made.” The royal prophet David made this clear: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; and by the spirit of his mouth all their ornament and virtue and army.” And “the Lord is faithful in all his words”; wherefore let no one dare to change the word of God. It remains forever, and all created things must obey it; because He spoke and things were made. Fire, ice, and the stormy winds were created by His word. It also melts crystal, enlivens man, heals the sick, and kills transgressors; the sacred letters have handed all this down.

Therefore, it is performed above nature, and in the broadest empire that word is established. According to John the Evangelist: “In the beginning was the Word with God: all things were made through him,” and what is greater, “the Word was God.” Nothing, therefore, will be more powerful for us than that which is of the most vehement strength and full of supreme power. It is the virtue of God willing to do any work; or rather, the very will of the one willing.

We cannot judge, while in this fragile body, how great the field of its virtue is, about which the oracle said: “Whatsoever the Lord willed, he did in heaven and on earth, in the sea and in the depths.”

You have the first principle: what one ought to use in miracles, which exceed the custom, the beaten path, and the fixed limits of nature. For it will not be a terminated and narrow virtue, like subordinate things, but the work of that divine will, of infinite power. This is the word of God, written in the Apocalypse: “King of kings and Lord of lords,” who holds the imperium of omnipotence over both things that are and are not.

This speech might seem inept to Peripatetics and physicists; but to contemplative men, it is apt. For “God,” says the Apostle, “calls those things which are not, as those things which are.” Dionysius, affected by this discipline, says: “We will also dare to affirm by reason: that that which is not, is a participant of the beautiful and the good.”

Whether you call this 'the Word' or by any other name, I do not object. Provided the first exit of divinity from within itself is understood: as light from light, and the resplendence back to light; or of mind to reason, and conversion in that order. The Greeks call this either the rational word, or the verbal reason 'Logos', meaning both reason and word.

Zeno, that ancient author, names the maker of the universe 'Logos'; and Hermes, the most ancient philosopher, writes to his son: “For there is, O son, a secret word of wisdom, holy of holies, of the only Lord of all and pre-intellect, which is to be uttered above man.”

Plato felt that all things in the world consist of this word. In the *Epinomis*, he says: “To these gods let us render honors... in which the world itself, which the most divine word ordained, completes its own circuit.” He first admires this work, then conceives a love for it.

You will not judge this word in the usual manner of words, as a breaking of the air, a messenger like mortal voice. We must compare the fragile with the sempiternal. At least, compare it to the internal word of man, the supreme reason in us, which proceeds from the mind, neither wholly the same with the mind, nor wholly divorced from it. Human reason flowing from the mind is not alien from its source; but when it leads the mind forth, it cannot be seen as anything other than the mind. The nature of the mental substance is the same, though diverse in its offices.

Think of the 'Word of the Father's mind' as a perfect, self-subsistent Reason that proceeds from Him. While this Word derives its existence and nature from the Father simultaneously, it is a distinct 'expression' of the Father. When we contemplate all that exists within God or emanates from God, the Word reveals its own divine nature. We can therefore affirm that the Word is one and the same in substance with the Father's own mind. Nothing creates separation or distance between God the Speaker and God the Word except for their relational distinction. In every other respect, they are equal, or rather, they are the same. Both are fully God; both share the divine nature of Fatherhood; and both are therefore eternal, existing before time began. The relationship is this: The Father is the eternal source who always generates the Word, and the Word is eternally generated by the Father. The Word possesses power equal to the Father who begets Him, and the Father is the source who begets the equally powerful Word.

Plato himself insinuates this in his Epistle to Hermias, Erastus, and Coriscus: “It is fitting that all of you read this Epistle together... testifying to God the leader of all things... the cause, the paternal Lord; whom, if we philosophize rightly, we shall know.”

Don't you see the clear connection? What Plato taught in his Epinomis—that the Word (Logos) established the order of the universe—is precisely what this text identifies as God, the cause and

ruler of all things, whom it also calls Father. It follows, therefore, that the Son is the Word, and his Father is the Lord."

Now recall Baruchias's speech yesterday, in which he prudently instructed us about the ineffable name Tetragrammaton, most fitting only for the highest God. He related that interpreters placed 'Lord' in its place, finding no equal word for it. Join to that my own oration the day before, where I affirmed that Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato traveled through Syria to be instructed in Hebrew disciplines. You see Plato's trace here: he calls the Father of God the leader and cause of all things. Who, therefore, would doubt that the most divine Word, according to Plato, fashioned every work?

The Word, therefore, is the Son of the Lord; wherefore He is both God, and leader, and cause of the world. He is named by many names. But among them, one exists chosen for miracles, in which the highest Father was most pleased. He made us more certain of this through the prophets. Hear the oracle spoken by Isaiah: “A child is born to us, and a son is given to us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful.”

Since his names are so many, we must seek which one is that distinguished name 'Wonderful'. He is called by John 'the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.'

First: 'Son'. Although it applies to other men, it belongs most properly to this divine Word. He is the same as the Father, and also from him. The Father gave the origin of being to a like nature; the Son received it. Thus, 'only-begotten' is most proper and unique to that Son.

What is the 'bosom of the Father'? It signifies his coeternity with the Father, who commanded Moses: “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel: He who is, sent me.” From eternity the Son is in that bosom. John declares the intimate nativity of the Son from the Father.

David calls him 'hand', speaking to the Father: “Why do you turn away your hand and your right hand from the midst of your bosom?” Therefore, the hand in the bosom of the Father is the Son, and through this hand He made all things; who says: “My hand also founded the earth, and my right hand measured the heavens.” The prophet prays: “Help me, O Lord my God... let them know that this is your hand; and that you, O Lord, have done it.” That the Father and the hand are the same one substance and one God is seen in the 44th Psalm, read in the Hebrew manner: “You are your hand; you have scattered the nations, and planted them.”

Let us return to the Son, called by the Latins 'the Word,' by the Greeks more significantly 'Logos'. 'Logos' is both reason, definition, word, and speech. Let me obtain pardon for applying divine things to our fragile state. As human reason subsists relative to the mind, so the divine Reason subsists relative to the Father: not only in their impassible generation, but also their cohabitation. There is no reason without mind, nor mind without reason.

Since the office of the word is to bring forth the inner things of the mind, to display the will of the speaker, the Son is most aptly called the Word of the Father. For as John describes him, he is ‘the Father's one and only Son, who is intimately close to the Father's heart.” Therefore, he was surnamed 'The angel of great counsel', who was to reveal God's supercelestial meditations to mortals.

Regarding 'definition': it ought to eviscerate the whole nature of a thing. The reason which the name 'Logos' signifies is the definition itself. This divine Word is the evident demonstration of the paternal nature, a description of the generating nature. “Therefore, he who sees me,” Jesus says, “sees also the Father,” calling this sight the knowledge of the intellect.

The Son is the perfect image of the Father. Paul expressed this, exhorting the Colossians to give thanks to “the Father, who has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, who is the image of the invisible God.” How can there be an image of an invisible thing? Not by colors, lineaments, or effigy. The image is the living and willing Son himself; not assembled by artists, not like the sons of human propagation.

Paternity is spoken of first and more truly concerning divine generation; ours is a posterior shadow. As the Apostle writes to the Ephesians: “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named.” In mortal things, an imitation is not of one substance, nor of equal form. But that divine effigy is so near to the Father that it is correctly called the same and the image. Where the image is the identity of the *homoousios* (same substance), the thing itself is discerned wholly in the effigy.

This consubstantial image is sometimes called the 'seal'. What a ring works in the form of a seal linearly with time, the Father expresses in his Word substantially with eternity.

Concerning the 'character', since the Son is also adorned by this name, I will offer another opinion, which I will explain willingly. First, I remind you that the names of the divine Word ought to be understood in a threefold manner, according to its diverse condition:

1. The Word is the foundational cause of all creation, is God Himself, and is the one who orders nature. Furthermore, He existed with God in the beginning, intimately present with the Father like a hand resting in His bosom.
2. The same Word of God proceeds from the Father through his own Spirit.
3. Finally, in recent years, the Word was incarnate from an incorrupt Virgin, as foretold by the prophets.

Let us read the oracle of Jeremiah: “The Lord Tetragrammaton created a new thing on the earth: a woman shall compass a man.” This is the staggering, unprecedented, and wondrous event: that a woman, without any sexual union or human intervention, conceived by God's power alone. This was not a natural process but a direct act of creation, forming not a mere embryo but a perfect human being, conceived and fully formed within her womb.

This is the very miracle the prophet Isaiah foretold when he said: “The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son, and will call his name Immanuel.”

What else does 'Immanuel' express but the incarnate Word (Immanuel which means, ‘God with us’)? Because he is the Word, he is God; because he converses with us, he appears incarnate. Otherwise, the sign would be of no value. There were three things in that preeminent sign: First, that a virgin should conceive. Then, that a virgin should give birth. Lastly, that he should be both God and man at the same time. The universal Church of our ancestors is a witness, who followed that Theanthropos (God-man).

Wherefore John, his disciple, made known through his Epistle: “This is what we proclaim to you: what has existed from the very beginning—what we have heard with our own ears, what we have seen with our own eyes, what we have personally beheld and our own hands have touched—concerning the Word who is life. This life was made visible, and we have seen it. We are eyewitnesses and we declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and has been revealed to us.”

This sign is not esteemed so supereminent merely because he appeared in a human body, as angels once did, but because he leavened the whole mass of human substance by his advent, just as yeast

leavens dough. This excels every miracle. The divinity of this divine man, the incarnate Word, is such a leaven of our nature, that by its yeast mixed into us, it elevates us so that, the primeval condemnation being removed, through his name as Son we can become divine.

You have, therefore, the three states of the Word:

1. He is God.
2. He is the Son.
3. He is incarnate.

For each of these we have found the most religious appellations in the sacred letters. Nothing is more certain about God than what we enunciate by privative or negative words; this negation is certain, since His substance is subject to no name. Whatever affirmative symbols are asserted about God are not His essence, but what is believed to be most proximate around it.

This is the source of the saying in Hermes: “His name cannot be spoken by human lips,” for it is a name that belongs to a realm beyond humanity. And in the Revelation: “On his head were many diadems, having a name written which no one knows except himself... and his name was called the Word of God.”

Here, the sacred divination teaches us about this Son of God, both when he has a proper name and when he does not. I recall the oration of Baruchias, who asserted the first emanation from God, called 'Kether' (the diadem). That which is highest contains in itself many diadems, which are his multiform wisdom. Therefore, the first emanation of such supreme majesty from the Father is one of pure light. Because this divine manifestation is beyond human expression, it cannot be given a specific name. For as the prophet Isaiah, speaking by divine inspiration, exclaims: “Who can fully

explain His origin?" The meaning is profound: if a prophet, who is God's own messenger, cannot declare it, then who on earth could? This underscores a fundamental truth: we cannot truly understand divine realities through human effort alone. Such knowledge can only come to us when God's Spirit supernaturally reveals it.

This is why the prophet asks just before: "The arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed?" We can now understand from the previous discussion what this 'arm' represents. Scripture reveals it as nothing less than God's own substantial power, a nature that exists through itself, yet is always in relationship with and proceeds from another. For just as God is eternally whole and never merely an instrument (a 'hand'), he is also never without offspring. He is eternally generative because he is eternally the Father. And since his act of generation is beyond time, he is eternally the Father of an eternal Son. We conceive this distinction in our mind obscurely. What we see through a mirror is an enigma that we cannot bring forth with a clear word.

Wherefore, bearing diadems on his head, he has a name in the Apocalypse which no one knows except himself. No one knows this proper, adequate name—not even the angels—except as much as the divinity itself has revealed gratuitously, according to our measure.

You see sufficiently that the one bearing diadems lacks an equal name among us. But clothed with a blood-stained garment, you see that he begins to be called by men the Son of God. Before the advent of the incarnate Word, all we had learned from prophets, philosophers, and poets was full of smoke and darkness.

"The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand. You are my Son, I have begotten you this day." And "his going forth is from the beginning to eternity." And "the stone which the builders rejected

has become the chief cornerstone... this is wonderful in our eyes.” These were dark, enigmatic oracles.

Who in that obscure age would have shown the Father and the Son in the Hebrew word for 'stone', 'Aben'? It is established that 'Ab' signifies 'father', and 'Ben' 'son'; connected, they make 'Aben', 'stone'. This hid a mystery.

Similarly, in the word 'Bara' ('he created'), with which the book of Moses begins, I might discern a knot where I could discern the Father (A), the Son (B), and the Spirit (R). One could conjecture that the word 'Bara' itself, in its first syllable 'Bra', shows that the most holy Trinity was the beginning of the world, or that the Father created heaven and earth in the Son. This interpretation rests on examining the Hebrew word for 'created,' Bara. If you take the last letter of this three-letter word (Aleph) and join it to the first letter (Bet), you immediately form the word Ab, which, as we demonstrated earlier, means 'Father.' Then, if you double the middle letter (Bet) by itself, you are left with the remaining letter (Resh). If you now add the letter (Bet) to the (Resh), it forms the word Bebar, which means 'in the Son.' (The vowels, as you know, are not written as separate letters in Hebrew but are interwoven as points and marks around the consonants.) When you consider the entire original word, Bara, you can perceive that the profound truth, 'The Father created in the Son', is mystically encoded within this single, foundational term. What a profound mystery! But to truly grasp this, one needs the insight of the prophetic spirit or divine inspiration.

In this manner, infinite things are comprehended in the sacred characters—not only coverings of past things, but predictions of future things, if one is present who may not do so much as to interpret them as prophesy. For the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Wherefore the Apostle: “While I would be happy if you all could speak in tongues, it is far better that you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, because their message

strengthens everyone, while speaking in tongues only helps the individual." Furthermore, in his work Timaeus, Plato distinguishes between two kinds of inspired people: there are 'seers' who receive visions, and there are 'interpreters' who explain the seers' words.

This idea of divine inspiration extends even to poets. Indeed, the Apostle Paul, the great teacher of the Gentiles, himself gives poets the title of 'prophet.' Therefore, let us apply this same principle to poets and consider them in this prophetic light. Who before the incarnate Word would have dared to apply the mysteries of Orpheus about Night, Heaven, and Ether to the summit of the deity, so that with Orpheus he might say of the Father: "Night is the generation of the universe. I, Night, am the Father."? Hear Malachi: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?" And the Psalms testify God placed his tabernacle in darkness.

Nor would this have sufficiently yielded concerning the unique nativity of the Son, unless in the same Orphic hymn it followed: "Night, who emits light." Wherefore the prophet directs his vows: "Send forth your light and your truth; they have led me and brought me to your holy mountain." And to you, O Father, whose tabernacles are in darkness, both you and your Son have spoken. "I am the light of the world." For "the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father," has led me into sublime contemplation, signified by the mountain to which Moses ascended.

Let us hear the Apostle teaching more clearly: "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ." Here you may know the incorporeal Word, to whom the Apostle added 'prosopon' (person), the sign of the trine distinction.

Let us also receive from Orpheus what he sings about heaven, whom he calls the parent of all. If Night generated all things, she generated also heaven; therefore, Night is the parent of heaven, not

as the common parent, but as emitting celestial light from herself. This is not in the manner of a common, universal parent, but rather as a being that radiates celestial light from its own essence. This is the sky, which Orpheus calls Ololampes, 'the All-Shining', because it is entirely luminous. He soon also names it Pangentora, meaning 'the Begetter of All.' This Begetter is in harmony with Night, whom he calls the 'all-sustaining Goodness.' For just as Night is the generative source of all things, so too is that sky proclaimed in the same hymns to be the Begetter of All. This makes the words of David ring true: “For you, darkness is not dark, and night shines as the day; both darkness and light are alike to you.”

Consider now the co-substantial power of our darkness and light. "As its darkness, so also its light." The ancient creator of all things is each God, each light: the Father in the Son, and the Son from the Father, as light from light and the brightness of eternal light.

Concerning which, our poet Ennius says: "Behold this sublime shining one whom all invoke as Jove." He spoke not of the Stygian Jove but of the celestial one, just as Euripides did in these verses: "You see the high one, who embraces that infinite ether and the earth on all sides with moist arms; believe this to be Jove, consider this to be God."

This is that sublime brightness, about which Ennius taught us, whom the ancients called Diespiter and Lucecius on account of the daily light. Whence by our people he is also called the Sun, as in Malachi: "But unto you that fear my name, the Sun of righteousness." Whom John on Patmos saw through a revelation: "And his face was as the sun, shining in his power," and he said: "I am the first and the last."

Therefore, concerning our sky, which we consider the Son in the Orphic mystery, a similar song of his hymn will have been sung by another: "Old from birth, the beginning of all things, and the

end of all." Indeed, likewise concerning Jove it is said: "Jupiter was the first born, and the last, and the prince of thunderbolts."

The cause of our opinion is this: that since he is God the Son, and although he is God, nonetheless he was born a man. Concerning which it is written to the Corinthians: "The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven, heavenly."

The conjecture about the ether is easy, which Orpheus calls Pyrignon, that is, the fiery breath. The first part of his hymn I interpret thus, for he supplicates the ether, exclaiming: "O Jove, having august power, always invincible." Do you not perceive the equal power? You perceive the Jovial union, that is, the partnership with heaven.

For according to Hermes Trismegistus: "Jupiter is of the sky," that is, the essence; through the sky he supplies life to all. Wherefore the Greeks call him Zēn with a just name, for *zēn* we say "to live." "In him," says our theologian, "was life." Or also Dia, as in Plato's Cratylus, because it signifies "through." For *Dia*, that is, through him all things were made.

He embraces with his moist arms both the spirit and the corporeal nature, that is, the ether and the earth, according to the opinion of Euripides. For since he is the only-begotten Son of God, as the sacred scriptures hand down, "descending like rain upon a fleece, and like droplets dripping upon the earth," it is clear that he embraces with his moist arms, from the shining river, from that effluence flowing from the paternal substance, the ether—that is, that spirit nourishing all things within and fiery vigor, as Virgil says; and the celestial origin, not from this sky which we see with corporeal eyes, but from the invisible, that is, the divine Son, and proceeding from himself the heaven of heavens.

The Hebrews call the sky, that is the object of this embrace, Schamain, as if Eschumann, that is, fire and water. For Aether is said as if *ath-aer*, from *athō* (that is, I burn) and *aer* (that is, spirit), a name according to Greek grammar, signifying a burning spirit.

From night, therefore, according to Orpheus, the sky is born. From the sky proceeds the ether. "And one day, there was evening and morning." A thing very similar to a miracle, and scarcely believable, or rather incredible unless the Word of God was incarnated, which has instructed us in such great mysteries. There was one thing which was simultaneously both evening and morning and day, three days before the sun and moon and stars were born. There was one light, distinct in morning, evening, and day, which was the same with the same disposer, who said: "Let there be light." Consider the words, weigh the mysteries.

These are the words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Behold the most brief summary of the whole creation. But what was it that was made? And what was in the beginning before anything was made? And in what manner was that which was in the beginning? And who or by what relation was he who generated the beginning?

Then it follows: "And the earth was a vast deformity." Finally, the sky is like a garment which surrounded and concealed the earth, and a breath hovered as if very near. And it was called the abyss, as in the 103rd Psalm: "Who established the earth upon its foundation; it shall not be inclined forever and ever. The abyss like a garment is his covering." Above the sky was darkness; after darkness, water; above the water, the spirit of the Lord.

And so God, by speaking, made the Word flash forth, and there was light. And he divided the light from the darkness, and he called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and there was morning in one day.

Indeed, darkness and evening are present in the Orphic night. Light and day, the sky. But morning, the ether. For the most ancient of the Latins said *manum* for the same as *clarum* (bright), just as the Greeks say *athrion*. From this *mane* (morning) is derived. Indeed, day proceeds from night, and morning depends on both; but not only before the creation of heaven and earth, but even before all eternity.

Perhaps I have spoken these words rashly, letting them fall from my lips without due caution. Yet I have done so for the sake of our discussion, and because I believe the moment is opportune. My purpose is this: to demonstrate that the era before the Incarnation of the Son—the time of our forefathers—was not a futile age. On the contrary, our ancestors, even then, were able with remarkable accuracy, propriety, and firmness of conviction to unravel these very mysteries and others like them. But after that Word of God came into flesh, to illuminate men, then the eyes of our mind were opened, so that we now recognize many divine things more clearly than their authors, especially whatever pertains to the divinity of the Word.

But let us return to his names, from which we must choose one wonder-working name, in which alone we mortals, constituted in nature above nature, may rule over fate, and produce monsters, portents, and miracles, i.e. the marks of divinity.

So that you may understand the various names attributed to that Word, I think it should be mentioned:

1. Which names are common with the Father and the Spirit.
2. Which names are considered proper to the divine subsistence.
3. Which are for the flesh.

4. Which are for the incarnate one.

In the first place, you, Sidonius, cannot but admire the great convenience Baruchias brought in his speech yesterday. I know you will congratulate me, since you see me relieved of such a great enumeration of names. For all names signifying the divine and ineffable quality, essence, abstraction, relation, virtue, operation, likeness, and whatever follows the supreme nature, are also predicated of the Son of God, whose name is Wonder-working, and simultaneously of the whole Trinity.

We have thus separated them so that some, which do not signify what the nature of divinity is (for this is impossible for human imitation), but seem to indicate what is *around* it, these indeed pertain to the essence, which you, Baruchias, have copiously absolved. But others I will refer to as the varied dispensation of providence. This last division rises into two branches: into the disposition of things to be done without a body, and into the affection of the assumed flesh, that is, of the man. The former is in common, the latter properly is attributed to the Word. For all the names which are fitting before that unique body are common to the super-substantial and one Trinity.

Therefore, leaving aside those which are of the essence, since we were sufficiently taught about them yesterday, now we must recite those things which are believed to imitate dignity and power. For indeed, He who is and Ego Ple, and the consuming fire, and the Tetragrammaton which signifies ineffability, seem to me, Baruchias, explained by you, and pertain to your study, which you thought were of the substance.

Nor can we deny that He is signified by imperial majesty: Lord, and King, and God, as we are instructed by John of Damascus. For Scripture speaks of 'Lord of lords,' 'King of kings,' 'Holy of holies,' and 'God of gods.' However, as Gregory of Nazianzus argues, only the name On ('The

Being One' or 'He Who Is') is a designation that exists in and of itself, denoting God's absolute and supreme essence.

Since the grammarians hand down that *theos* (God) is a mutated word from *thein*, according to Plato, which is believed to be derived from *Aethin*, that is, to run, because God is a consuming fire, yet it is not of such a kind that it explains being something according to itself without comparison to another. For the Lord said to Moses: “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my identity for all generations.’” This divine statement presupposes a people over whom He is God. Titles like 'Lord' and 'King' are relational; they inherently imply the existence of subjects and inferiors over whom one rules. In the same way, for God to be called 'the God of Abraham' presupposes someone who worships Him.

Yet He alone is fundamentally the Most High, the Exalted One. As the Psalmist says, “I have declared, ‘You are gods, all of you sons of the Most High,’” but this is a derived status, whereas He is the source, the Sublime, who dwells in eternity itself. Furthermore, many of His titles are relational, defining Him in connection to His creation. He is called the Cause, the Prince, the Leader; He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End; He is the Head and the Eye of humanity. Each of these names necessarily points to something else—a creation to rule, a story to complete, a body to lead. In contrast, other names describe His essential, inherent power and nature. By His own virtue, He is simply: Wonderful, Almighty, Great, Terrible, Living, Seeing, Eternal, the Ancient of Days, Permanent, Strong, Life Eternal, and the Lord of Hosts.

Likewise, God is judged to display energy by certain names, which they are accustomed to derive from *theos* from *thein*, that is, from running through, warning, penetrating. Wherefore in Exodus

the Lord speaks: " You shall not worship any foreign god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." But also from other works which Dionysius calls "causative," Nazianzen calls "appellations," God himself also possesses cognomens.

From the magnitude and beauty of the works it happens rationally to esteem the maker. For the highest creator is made manifest to us not from his substance which has no form, but from these things which are apparent and from the very effects. In this way he is called: "Wonder-maker," "Man of war," "He who crushes war," "Protector," "Avenger," "Father of all," "Creator," "Redeemer," "Saviour," and the remaining of this kind.

Likeness follows, which extends widely, and something is arrived at from many comparisons from all good things: vital, corporeal, rational, legal, mental, angelic, connected to one author, is called "a sea of goodness"; and from all conditions of living gathered into one origin, is called "the fountain of life"; and from all brightnesses, splendors, lights, with all light poured into one clarity, is named "the Sun." For the divine philosopher wrote: what the sun is to sensible things, that God is to intelligible things.

Another kind of likeness is by comparison: one to one and equal to equal is taken, just as if I wish to compare the clarity of the sun to the divine light. For thus we are accustomed to call *hypostasis* (as you will hear more openly), especially in divine names, not as Boethius called ‘substance,’ but as it was useful for the matter, ‘subsistence,’ while the thing itself is plain by custom. You have certainly heard that God is called the sun by the philosophers. But just as the sun has a globe, rays, and light, and all is one in the sun, so of God is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; and all is one in God.

The same may be judged about the soul. For God is a soul to us, as the poems say. There is also a human soul, which consists of mind, reason, and sense. The mind illuminates reason, and reason flows into sense; all is one soul. The center of nature, the middle of all things, the series of the world, the countenance, mode, and bond of the world; so that more easily, although in an obscure image, yet in some way it may be compared to God.

Furthermore, nature accompanying the divine in many things, by which divinity has obtained a name, such as Unity, and Truth, and Goodness. He is also called God alone, always, and everywhere. Understanding infinite things; understanding himself first and individual things second; through his own being making all things. He is named Love and Charity, immortal Providence. He is called Wisdom, Beauty, Justice, Peace, and Perfection.

Lastly, there are in immense number those things which enunciate God privatively or negatively, much more truly, not due to a defect but on account of his super-excellence. For God exceeds all speech.

This whole enumeration is brought thus far so that you may think all those surnames are not only of God the Father and the Spirit, but also of the Word, which is the most loving Son, the best, the greatest, the sempiternal God, ineffable, incomprehensible, immovable eternity, who is one in all things, and all things which are from the beginning.

For he himself is the creator of all things, and through him the Father created all things, and he himself is both the consuming fire and the Tetragrammaton, light, day, Olympus. King of kings and Lord of lords. God of gods, Holy of holies. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob. Alone the Most High, the Exalted, the Sublime, inhabiting eternity, prince, leader, first and last, Alpha and Omega, beginning, middle and end, Head and eye of man, perfection, peace, justice,

beauty, wisdom, immortal providence, charity and love. Understanding infinite things; understanding himself first and individual things second; through his own being making all things; always and everywhere. Unity and truth and goodness, soul, reason, sun, ray, fountain of life, sea of goodness, cause, father of all, creator, protector, saviour, redeemer, man of war, doing wonders, crushing wars. Avenger, Jealous Lord, and a Zealot God, God almighty, wonderful, great, terrible. Living and seeing I. Ancient of days, permanent, strong. Lord of virtues, and life eternal.

These and similar praises the Word shares commonly with the other persons. But by this itself he is properly celebrated because he is the Son, begotten without beginning, since he is said to have a Father, but not a beginning, and to be begotten from the eternal Father always and impassibly; one from one and uniquely, whom the whole Father shows wholly, and demonstrates his nature adequately.

Whatever words aspire to this, whatever suggest such a distinction, will be of such a kind as will explain with peculiar ornament the most divine Word, which we investigate as worthy of the highest praises: the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father; the character of his hypostasis; the splendor of his glory and the figure of his substance.

Perhaps from that custom by which *hypostasis* is derived from *substare* (to stand under), and not from *subsistere* (to subsist), through a certain translation by learned men. Boethius, translating Aristotle, used the name *substantia* (substance) similarly, which casts confusion, so that scarcely any students of Latin theology can bear this variety.

I beseech you, attend carefully. The senate and faithful people of the Christian republic have decreed: that there is one alone true God, eternal, immense, unchangeable, incomprehensible,

omnipotent and ineffable, Father and Son and Holy Spirit; Three indeed persons, but one essence, substance, nature, entirely simple. These are the words of the council's decree. This is the law.

This is the true rule of religion: the substance, essence, and nature are one and the same entirely. *Hypostasis*, however, in the firm divinity is not a middle term, but is diverse. Of one and the same essence, nature, substance, there are three hypostases, which Boethius also translated into Latin as "persons."

Therefore, we must conclude that 'hypostasis' and 'substance' are not identical, nor can they be used in the same way. This is similar to the distinction between 'person' and 'substance', they are not interchangeable terms. But the Catholic faith is this, that we venerate one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity. Neither confusing the persons, nor separating the substance. In this we recognize that "substance" signifies one thing, "hypostasis" another.

For the Father, by generating the Son from eternity, gave his substance to him, and nonetheless retained it; and the Son, by being born, received the substance of the Father, but neither did he transfer his own hypostasis or proper person into him, nor did he assume it from him. For they are both of two hypostases and two persons, but truly of one and the same substance.

Wherefore I would easily believe that Jerome translated for *hypostasis*, not *substantia* but rather *subsistentia*, especially in a matter of such weight. So that when the Apostle says: "The character of his hypostasis," we understand "the figure of his subsistence." For how is the Word, "the character," the sign or figure of the paternal substance, which is not similarly but truly that whole substance of the Father?

Therefore, if the character is from that other whose form it makes exist (as Chrysostom testifies), it is necessary that it is called the character of the paternal hypostasis, that is, of the subsistence.

But not the sign of the substance. For the Father, by generating, signed the person of the Son, just as the figure of a signet ring expresses the form of the seal. Just as the Teacher himself says: "Work not for the food which perishes, but for that which endures unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For him the Father, God, has signed."

For the Father has set his seal of authority upon the Son. He is also called the 'Radiance of God's glory' or 'Splendor.' This 'light from light' reveals the shared, single essence of the Godhead, allowing us to truly recognize the two distinct persons, the Father and the Son, within that one essence. Furthermore, he is the perfect 'Image' or 'Icon' of the Father, making the Father fully known, as we explained earlier. This is not a mere representation or a copy, but a living, natural likeness, existing in inseparable union with the original. He is eternally begotten, not made, and is himself the source and foundation of eternity.

There follows the Virtue of God and the Wisdom of God. Which Paul, writing to the Corinthians, surnames. "For we preach," he says, "to them who are called Jews and Greeks that Christ is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God." For he holds and offers all virtue in himself, as the author of all virtue. When the prophet contemplated this, he exclaimed: "Exalt yourself, O Lord, in your virtue."

What shall we say about that wisdom "whose foolishness is wiser than men"? For he is full of all wisdom and intellect, "and of his wisdom there is no number." But also placed super-eminently above all reason, and mind, and wisdom, the bestower of all wisdom, and the cause of all understanding, and proceeded from the head of God. In Him indeed "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Moreover, since the Son of God names himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life, it will befit us to venerate those words with religious worship. "Blessed," says the prophet, "are the immaculate in one way." For they obtain by divine vision a pure heart, which is the only beatitude of men, granted through this one way. Let us hear from his own mouth: "No one," he says, "comes to the Father except through me." The way, therefore, by which one goes to the Father, is the Son; and properly he is the life; since by this door, by this way, is our certainty and knowledge of the Father. Therefore he is the Truth. For otherwise it would be error, not certainty. Furthermore, he is the Truth, because he is one. For the false is many, not one. But the last two are perhaps common to the whole Trinity. But to the Son, the way seems to be a proper and peculiar name.

Indeed, very many such forms of divine names are contained in the sacred writings, which all harmonize in this goal: that the Word of God, that is, the Son, is from the substance of the Father, without beginning, alone begotten, the Only-begotten. The Character and figure of the paternal subsistence; the splendor of glory; the filial hypostasis and person of the Word; the seal of the Father; light from light; the Image or icon; the virtue of God and the wisdom of God; the way and the truth and the life.

Now it remains to mention briefly those things which follow the human nature.

This Word, therefore, although he is God, sempiternal, born from the substance of the Father before the ages, yet is nonetheless born in time from the substance of the Virgin, perfect God and perfect man, subsisting from a rational soul and human flesh. Therefore, since he is fully human, you must understand that he shares in every aspect of our human experience, with one sole exception: sin. Indeed, he became all things to all people, sharing completely in everything that we are, sin alone excluded. Precisely for this reason, he does not reject, despise, or refuse the circumstances and titles that are part of the human condition.

Son of Man, Shepherd, Pontiff, Obedient, Servant, Mandatary, Sent, speaking nothing from himself, judging no one, not giving to sit on his right or left, not doing his own will, ignoring the day of confirmation, subjecting all things, made subject, spending the night in prayer, praying on the mountain, asking the Father, inquiring where they had laid Lazarus, advancing in wisdom, age, and grace with God and men, sleeping in the boat, hungering after a fast, fatigued from a journey, weeping, anxious, comforted by an angel, suffering, carrying the cross, crucified, dead.

Now I pass to the flesh, because he was also a worm and not a man, that he was the serpent in the desert, the grain falling into the earth, the vine, the sheep, the lamb, the sacrifice, wrapped in a shroud, buried.

You, therefore, who have this concern, and who are eager to perform miracles, choose from this assembly, from this army, from this almost legion of names and deeds, by which it is most especially to be used in operations of this kind.

Sidonius said: I, seeing this multitude of priests, willingly slip away and transfer myself entirely to you, who preside over today's discussion; or, if Baruchias there desires it, the podium should be conceded to him. For I, from the beginning of my age, and from my tenderest years, have been initiated in other sacred rites; I know no majesty, no god, nothing practicable which we see, the brightest lights of the world: the Sun, the maker of the day, and the Moon, the ornament of the night, or perhaps other little lights, which you call stars and planets.

And afterwards, wishing to be most religiously devoted to figurations, those names of invisible divinities occurred to me which Ennius rightly comprehended in two verses: Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jove, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo.

Or those which the most ancient Orpheus, writing to Musaeus, enumerates more amply: Earth, Proserpina, Liber, Spumigena, Hebe, Hercules, Nymphs, Pan, Memory, Muse, Graces, Hours, Year, Latona, Dione, Curetes, Corybantes, Castor, Pollux, Themis, Night, Day, Faith, Justice, Rhea, Saturn, Tethys, Oceanus, Eternity, Time, Styx, Pronoea."

Sidonius continues listing various spirits and deities: "Celestial demons; aerial; aquatic; terrestrial; subterranean; fire-dwelling. Semele; Bacchus; Ino. Leucothea; Palamon; Victory; Adrastia; Aesculapius; Pallas; Vertumnus; Thunder; Harvest; Adonis; Eumenides; Hecate; and others of which the same grave author makes mention in his hymns.

But I must be interrupted at some point. While other matters were not pressing, I lapsed incidentally into external things: and like a scout, I crept into the enemy's camp. Thus I have read the Gospels of the Christians.

Baruchias said: And I too. For I have judged that those demons of yours, Sidonius, though with horror and trembling, are both to be read and yet always not so much to be read as to be neglected, because they differed from the paternal institution. It was not congruent with reason that what was made by another should be called a god; whereby I more easily accepted that the Word of God is God, since he is the same with God and without beginning simultaneously with the Father, and simultaneously from the Father he was born before all eternity and before all ages. For that he was born from a virgin pertained not so much to essence as to dispensation. For it was so because he willed it. He could have assumed another nature if he had willed. For the Lord has done whatsoever he willed, in heaven and on earth.

But since you give me the option of choosing among so many names which one seems to be the most efficacious for all in the working of miracles; indeed I myself have previously professed that I know nothing particularly about these, since the power of deeds and names did not accompany my ancestors to this age of ours. How in the memory of the fathers, works wrought beyond nature and beyond fate are said to have been done in the name of the Tetragrammaton, unless there have been found, as elsewhere, so also among the Hebrews, lazy, superstitious sorcerers, whose malignant spirits also obstruct minds in every nation.

Wherefore we pray you, Capnion, proceed so that from all the most sacred names we may not be ignorant of that which is the most powerful for miracles. For thus Sidonius also desires with me.

Sidonius said: I indeed desire nothing else, and I pray you again and again to proceed.

Here Capnion spoke: It is manifest that no signs of our voice, words, or lines have power, not only over those effects which are above nature, but not even over those of which nature is the mother, unless joined to a nobler operative virtue. For Aristotle, in his book On the Soul, has proven that neither sound nor odor, unless through some accident, otherwise wields no dominion over the body, and works no effect on substances. For we consist of primary, not tertiary, qualities.

Therefore, the virtue of nobler things, which brings force to words above nature, is not only some natural virtue but also above nature, because any such virtue which acts with nature as a guide brings forth something similar, but does not operate above its own species.

And so, since it was agreed among us without controversy yesterday, that the omnipotence of God alone is the creator of miracles ("Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," as the prophet avows, "who alone does great wonders."), we would not think it irrelevant that to each wonder-working word God himself has imparted his own singular omnipotence, by which the operative virtue of

wonderful effects is brought to us even through the ministry of angels, just as we have found attested by the sacred word concerning certain figures or confections.

“Make a bronze serpent and set it up for a sign; whoever having been struck looking upon it shall live.”

Likewise, “If a spirit of jealousy stirs (within a husband), the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and put a little dust from the pavement of the tabernacle into it. And when he has set (his wife) before the Lord, he shall uncover her head, and shall put upon her hands the sacrifice of remembrance and the oblation of jealousy. But he himself shall hold the most bitter waters, in which he has heaped up curses with execration. And he shall adjure her and say: If a stranger has not slept with you, and if you are not defiled, forsaking your husband, these most bitter waters into which I have heaped curses will not harm you. But if you have turned aside from your husband and are defiled, and have lain with another man, you will be subject to these maledictions: May the Lord give you unto a curse, and an example to all his people; may he make your thigh rot, and your swelling womb burst. May the cursed waters enter into your belly, and may your womb swell and your thigh rot. And the woman shall answer: Amen, amen. And the priest shall write these curses in a little book and shall blot them out with the most bitter waters into which he has heaped the curses; and he shall give it her to drink. When she has drained them, the priest shall take from her hand the sacrifice of jealousy, and shall lift it up before the Lord, and shall put it upon the altar. And thus he shall give the most bitter waters to the woman to drink. If she is defiled and has dishonestly deceived her husband, the cursed waters will pass through her, and her belly will swell and her thigh will rot, and the woman will be a curse and an example to all the people. But if she is not defiled, she will be unharmed and shall bear children.”

Let us also hear a third teaching of God: “Thus shall you bless the children of Israel, and shall say to them: The Lord blesses you and keeps you. The Lord shows his face to you and has mercy on you. The Lord turns his countenance to you and gives you peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

By such force of words, by that power of figures, by the virtue of such confections, by these incantations of his, whether of malediction or benediction, and by composed words, the thing itself is fabricated by divine art, not by us, but through us.

For if divine virtue must be enclosed in these names, and infallible divinity must run to meet them, and omnipotence, surpassing all the laws of things, must be present, it will be necessary not to be ignorant. First, what that name is, preeminent above the others; that unblemished one remaining out of all, by whose secret energy the whole business of wonder is accomplished. Then, how it may be known that it is that very one and not another besides it. Thirdly, by what way, using it, we may obtain what we seek.

This is indeed great, and I know not if it is the greatest; but although gradually and with prudent investigation it is easy to trace out the cause of the name, whatever it may be, and pluck it out, until you comprehend what lies hidden and you immediately prove that it is that which you desire. For from the immense heap of sacred words, you have received certain ineffable ones, certain sublime ones. It is hard, but not impossible. But it is difficult for us that from the ineffable a voice should be made which we may use obediently, which may be ready for us in any case, with any affection, in any dangers.

Wherefore it would remain that, driven by necessity, we should turn to searching out the named voices by our own judgment, if a little while ago we were investigating most laboriously the cause of the operative virtue of the immense name.

Wherefore let us take up a method of proceeding. We operate on the principle that the lights of heaven, the rays of the stars, and the eternal fires of the firmament exert a real influence upon the earth below. This is the foundation for the belief that the powers of the celestial pole can foretell the future, and it is why we rely on the stars to determine the proper days for sowing seed and for harvesting crops. This same cosmic influence guides other critical endeavors: it informs the most favorable time to drive a ship through the marble-like sea with its hidden oars, when to deploy armed fleets for battle, and when to secure vessels—those 'stormy pines'—from being overthrown in the woods of the sea. It is therefore not in vain that we carefully observe the rising and setting of the constellations and the progression of the four diverse seasons, for they govern all these affairs.

This is the work of nature, this influence of rays, this descent of light, heat, and motion, penetrating all things. Hence, as the Mantuan poet (Virgil) says: 'Thus, celestial signs transform the shapes of creatures and stir the hearts of living beings... Thus, the Theban brothers perceived portents in the driving clouds and winds; thus arose that gathering of birds in the fields, the lowing of contented herds, and the cries of ravens."

And to comprise it in few words: as the nature of the universe acts naturally upon individual things according to its prescribed order, so the will dominating nature, the cause of all things, the divine will, pours forth its grace unlimitedly, and acts upon all and individual things supernaturally. And as that nature acts evidently through the medium, as it were, of sensible qualities, so this divine will sometimes acts through the medium of an intellectual name, without proportion, without the

similitude of cause to effect. Which God taught us through Isaiah by supernal revelation. “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, which shall go forth from my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in those things for which I sent it.”

When, therefore, concerning superior things, as I think, the Word of God (which by another name is called Reason, because both are taught by the Greeks in one word, Logos) has clearly appeared to us to be that by which God makes all things and works all things in heaven and on earth and in all the abysses.

Concerning which, hear, I beseech even you mathematicians. For Manilius, in his *Astronomica* to Augustus, says in his poem: “The divine force of the soul rules the vast body of the world constructed with limbs of nature hidden in diverse forms. And air and fire, and the earth and the lying sea; and God conspires and a hidden reason governs with sacred motion and dispenses many pacts into separate parts.”

Since that Reason is the same as the Word clad in human flesh, by which the more we could handle his salvation, our convenience obtained it when we saw it with these eyes and embraced it with individual senses, that very thing which we could name no longer as before with the ineffable circumscription of letters, but with an explicable voice and comprehensible sound; it was fitting that all our forefathers' pact with God concerning the ineffable and Tetragrammaton name, all negotiation, should cease and be transferred to the utterable name of the visible Word himself, through whom he dispenses pacts, as we have received a little above from the poems; and not only was it fitting to be so, but God willed it so, and predicted it long before; which I, if you bear it with an even mind, will affirm from the oracles of the prophets.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke that covenant of mine.” This is the passage as it is read in the book of Jeremiah. From this, we can clearly understand: the original covenant with God, that foundational bond with the Father, was broken by later generations, and its authority was consequently transferred to a new covenant.

But out of all the laws, edicts, and interdicts, six hundred and thirteen in number, this pact concerning the ineffable name is the precept which God initiated the sons and daughters of Israel; this is the promise; this is the covenant. “I am,” He says, “the ineffable Tetragrammaton, your God, strong and jealous.” And it follows: ‘You shall make an altar of earth for me, and shall offer upon it your holocausts and peace offerings, your sheep and oxen. In every place where the memory of my name shall be, I will come to you and bless you.” These things are promised in Exodus, chapter twenty.

But this covenant was broken. Hear now what the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house could you possibly build for me, or where could my resting place be? Was it not my hand that made all these things? However, this is the one to whom I will look: the one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at my word. But as for those who rely on ritual alone: whoever sacrifices an ox is like one who kills a man; whoever offers a sheep is like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever presents a grain offering is like one who offers pig's blood; and whoever burns incense is like one who worships an idol.”

And concerning the ineffable name, the Lord declares through the prophet Jeremiah: “Now behold, I have sworn by my own great name that my name will never again be invoked by all person of Judah in all the land of Egypt, using the oath, ‘The Lord lives.’"

When, therefore, we have shown that the pact which God made with his sons and daughters from the people of Israel concerned the name Tetragrammaton, and that all the science of God was also brought to nothing; it will still be necessary to explain that that name was changed into a certain other, which might obtain either equal or greater force with the ineffable one.

On which we may note again the oracle in Isaiah: “For thus said the Lord to the eunuchs: They that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that I will, and hold fast my covenant: I will give to them in my house, and within my walls, a place, and a name better than sons and daughters: I will give them an everlasting name which shall never perish.” As if he said: To my sons and daughters I gave a name which has ceased; but now to eunuchs who castrate themselves for the kingdom of heaven, I will give a better and more permanent name which will never cease.

But because in this prophecy the interpreter has translated *locus* (place) for *lad*, knowing that a great mystery is contained in the Hebrew, which has been revealed to us Christians. For there in Hebrew *lad* is put, which also signifies 'hand.' So that we judge it is not irrelevant that the Son of God, who is the hand of the Father, is promised to good men, and that a name is also to be given to him.

Concerning this translation of the name, the Lord speaks again through Isaiah: “And you shall leave your name for an oath to my elect: and the Lord God shall slay you, and call his servants by another name. In which he that is blessed upon the earth, shall be blessed in God, Amen.” That is,

in God who is not only the hand, as above, but also who is the truth, the incarnate Word of God, who said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Do you see that what we brought forward from the oracles at the beginning accedes to this: “A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and his government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called... Pele,” that is, Wonderful.

This is that name which we seek. This is that wonder-working name of the Wonder-Working Word which we await, which before eternity and above eternity is God, and in time became man.

Therefore first, admirable God and man; one person, two natures; or, what is greater, in one little body, the nature of Lord and the nature of servant. He was born but also was begotten before. From the female sex, which is human; but also from an uncorrupted virgin, which is divine. Hence without a father, there without a mother, as regards to his divinity. Carried in the womb but known in the carrying womb by the leaping prophet (John the Baptist) and exulting at the Word by whom he was to be born. Wrapped in swaddling clothes in a stable, but also, unfolded from the shroud and sudarium, he rose again from death. Reclining in a manger, but glorified by angels, shown by a star, adored by magi. He fled into Egypt, but put the Egyptian idols to flight. He had no form nor comeliness among the Jews, but he was beautiful before the sons of men, before David. On the mountain he shone, transfigured as the sun; and with what majesty he would come to judgment. Baptized as a man and forgiving sins as God; he did not need to be cleansed by the waters, but rather it was he who cleansed the waters. Tempted as a man, but victorious as God; and commanding us to be confident because he has overcome the world. He hungered, but he fed many thousands; and the living bread came down from heaven. He thirsted, but he also cried out: “If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink; and whosoever believes in him,” he promised, “from his belly shall flow living waters.” He was fatigued, but to those fatigued coming to him he promised

rest. He was weighed down with sleep, but when a storm arose, he awoke and commanded the winds and the sea. Though he paid the temple tax, he provided the coin from the mouth of a fish. When he was scornfully called a 'Samaritan,' he responded by healing the man the priests and Levites had passed by. His enemies accused him of being possessed by a demon, yet it was a demon-possessed man from Gadara who proclaimed him 'Son of the Most High God', and from that very man, he cast out a legion of demons, sending them plunging into the sea. He himself saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. He was also to be stoned, yet he hid himself and passed through those who tried to stone him. He prayed, but he also heard prayers. He wept, but he wiped away every tear. He asked where Lazarus was; for he was a man; but he raised Lazarus; for he was God. He was sold for a small price, thirty pieces of silver; but he redeemed the world at an even greater price. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, but he rules, that is, he feeds Israel and the whole world. He was a mute lamb, but also the Word and the voice of one crying in the desert. He is bruised, wounded, but he heals every infirmity and every languor. He is hanged on a cross, killed, but by the cross he restores life, and saves the thief, and by his death destroys the darkness. He is given vinegar to drink, but he also changed water into wine. He gives up the spirit, but he also has power to take it again. And the veil is rent, because things which were covered are revealed. The rocks are split, the dead rise. He died, but he gave life, and by dying, he destroyed death. He is buried, but he rises again. He descends to hell, but he leads back souls. And he ascends into heaven, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Rightly, therefore, his name is called Wonderful, because he himself is most full of wonders, of wonderful things. And the Lord has made this his holy one, who is the Holy of holies, wonderful, so that he may hear us when we cry to him.

You have what the Wonder-Working Word is. But how is its name enunciated? And is it one of the many enumerated before? Or is there besides another which you seek?

We, indeed, who are about to write, ought to imitate the sacred scripture, which teaches us concerning things absent and arcane. Therefore, if we embrace the earlier conversations of our discussion with the mind, we find the Word in the Father, and the hand in the bosom, and God invisible, and the name ineffable, just as oil in a cruse. But after he was incarnated: “The Word went forth from the Father; he bowed the heavens and descended; and the Lord sent out his light from on high.” And God was seen on earth, and conversed with men. And a new name was called to him with an articulated voice, which the mouth of the Lord named; and his name is oil poured out. The cruse, having the form of an ampulla, is opened by the circling motion; and the horn of the son of oil; the vineyard of the beloved is made, in which the Son himself is the true vine; and the name of the poured out oil is the sharing of participations and the consort of his companions before all others; God anointed him with the oil of gladness.

By which oracle, which we have gathered from the divine voice, Meliah, which is interpreted from anointing as Christus (Christ), is that name; or is there some other which signifies more properly and peculiarly the Son of God, Christ? For Christus is not a proper but a common name and an appellation of power and kingdom. Individual kings and priests, whoever are anointed, are christs. *Chrio* indeed is interpreted 'I anoint,' and *Christus* 'anointed.'

Therefore, it is this, his most proper name, that we must embrace, for it is through this name that we may receive all that we ask. And we are commanded to search for this very name within the sacred writings, a task requiring the utmost diligence. The one whose name we seek is the same who urges us, saying: “You search the Scriptures, for it is they who bear witness about me.”

This is confirmed by the sacred texts, which state: “I pray you, best of men, hear from the text. Lift up your minds, for now at last we have drawn near, and we are almost at the very threshold of finding the name.”

The sacred history of the Gospel is this. “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being who arrived said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. When she heard this, she was troubled at his speaking, and asked herself what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS.'

I will not recount the whole series of the story, but I will begin from that which pertains to our business. “And after the days of his circumcision were fulfilled, his name was JESUS, a name which he was given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”

O fortunate this hour! O men most clear, most loving fellow students of this most sacred and light-filled moment! In which we have found so excellent, so portentous, so true a name, by whose nod and authority, not only the vast circuit of the earthly globe, but also this whole machine of the world and that supermundane region of reigning super-celestial minds is ruled.

Whom Moses wrote in the law and the rest of the prophets, we find JESUS, long desired, long sought, at length happily investigated, with most pleasant fruit of pleasure and with an infallible, as I judge, bond of charity among us, to endure in perpetuity.

The most high and most excellent name! The most religious, holy, and honorable name! The name to which all sacred names are to be referred! Which is above every name, which is named in heaven

and on earth, even in the age to come. The miraculous and wonder-working name! The name utterable by the sound of the voice, no longer ineffable, no longer Tetragrammaton...but Pentagrammaton.

Nor is there any power in heaven and on earth which would dare resist the name JESUS. Nor is there any other name which is established as holy and religious; whose letters are God; whose syllables are Spirit; whose utterance is both God and man.

Why are you astonished, stunned? Why do you gaze at me fixedly? Why do you hold me more intently? If you wonder, I will add this: that which was previously for so long a time, indeed for so many ages, unutterable, is now made utterable by one letter. And if you are still amazed, be amazed at this: the descent of the Word into flesh was the transformation of a written symbol into a spoken reality.

See how openly and how faithfully I lay bare the whole secret. The conceiving of letters is called a syllable; the union of syllables, an utterance, you call a word. You reduce me to a grammarian, finally to the elements; when the matter is plain, yet of the greatest virtue. It is of no mediocre weight, if we believe Plato, the business concerning letters; he himself proves with the highest industry, and keen study, and sagacious genius, their riches, indeed their divinities, in the book which is titled ‘Cratylus’.

But let us return in truth, so that in this most excellent name of five letters, most letters are vowels, and one is a consonant. So also of the whole diction there are two syllables, of which the first arises from pure vowels, the second arises from vowels with an assumed consonant.

I ask you, recall the Pentateuch, and remember that the best, greatest God willed to be signified by no likeness, no effigy, no image, but by voice alone. As Moses, preaching to the people, said in

this manner: “The Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire: you heard the voice of his words, and you saw no shape at all.” And then he subjoins: “That you might know that the Lord himself is God, and there is no other besides him. From heaven he made you hear his voice, that he might teach you, and upon earth he showed you his exceedingly great fire.” Thus Moses proceed by hearing. 'The voice is of the spirit.' For the voice, defined as struck air, as is taught by John to Nicodemus: “The Spirit breathes where he wills, and you hear his voice, but you know not whence he comes, nor whither he goes.” God himself is also a spirit, as the Samaritan woman was taught. Therefore, the most fitting signs of God are the vowel letters, doubtless denominated from *vox* (voice).

Now dismiss this, because the divinity is designated by the vowels themselves. Now let us pass to the consonant, which we judge to be more corpulent because by itself and without a vocal spirit it has no sound of the mouth, but only consonates.

But that consonant is a letter not taken by chance, nor seized imprudently, not admitted by inexperience or ignorance or beyond opinion, beyond rule, but by the providence of the most high God, circumspect of all things, dispensing all things, according to the examination of his own reason, chosen from all characters, which among the Latins is named S.

But you taught us, Baruchias, if you remember yesterday's speech, that the divine word Es is considered, which is interpreted 'fire.' This is that greatest fire of God which the paternal voice showed to us on earth, saying: “This is my beloved Son.” And he says: “I have come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled?”

That you may understand more clearly and lucidly (for I will not deal with you through ambiguities and obscure circumlocutions of words, but I will act openly and plainly) and that this may suddenly

strike your minds: the matter will be, by my judgment, not small. Es, which signifies 'fire' in Hebrew, is this body: not divine, not of a tree, not phantastical, not apparent, as the Manichaeans, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Timothy, and others raving, have dreamed; but earthly, which Moses called 'fire on the earth,' according to the Pythagorean Cabala.

O thing pleasant to hear! We have truly found that it consists by the same numerical measure as this our name JESUS of august majesty, with equal harmony, with commensurate proportion.

But you will say perhaps that this letter S, which standing in the middle makes the second syllable, ought not to be pronounced according to the manner of the nations, but according to the custom of the sacred language (for thus they call the idiom of the Hebrew speech), since we are handling the wrestling-school of the sacred scriptures.

O that I would not hesitate to introduce you into the inmost shrines of the mysteries, if I were responding with the speech of Paul of Tarsus, when he thus says: “Be it known therefore to you, that this salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it.” But I will remain in the sacred idiom, and thus it will be easier for you, and also the name will be explained more manifestly with the fidelity of the Hebrew language, its manner and property. For Baruchias prevailed in arguing, as he himself boasts, that speech is more congruent with sacred things.

Come, do you wish now to explore that very consonant letter exactly? First beware lest you forget the vowels which enter into the composition of this name. Moreover, there are four vowels: IHVH, from which the ineffable Tetragrammaton consists; and which most properly designate the divine nature, as has been shown widely, greatly, and sometimes memorably by this our associate.

Since these, with human faculty and voice, could not opportunely, as was fitting, be pronounced for the incarnation of God, besides these he assumed another character with the flesh, by which

the ineffable sound, and then the invisible God, the unspeakable nod, could now sometimes grind with human teeth and thus be utterably called, so that what was before uninvocable might now be felt to be vocable.

But the Hebrews call it with the consonant Shin, which means 'teeth'; the presbyter Jerome, interpreting the *Padiam Urbianam*, writes thus: 'The seventh connection, which is the extreme, in which also in the very septenary number there is a mystical understanding: Koph, Res, Shin, Thau: that is, the invocation, the head, the teeth, the sign. Articulated voice is brought forth through the teeth, and in these signs we come to the head of all, who is Christ perpetual; through which we also come to the kingdom of the heavens."

I pray you, what is more sacred than this sacred thing? What pleasure more joyful than this? What honeys are sweeter than the prudence of God? And to enter into his hidden things, and to behold the sense of the Creator, and to learn the words of the Lord your God from the lapidary wisdom of this man? These are not my words, but Jerome's, a man of such authority, lest I should seem to some to be spreading fictions.

Therefore, teeth are the most powerful instruments of speaking, from which the letter Shin is said to be more celebrated; what wonder if, since all grammarians, I pass over the more noble theologians, confess this, that for the pronunciation of the ineffable name, that and no other element was summoned most commodiously?

I cannot say for certain by what path the correct form of that venerable divine name was lost to us; it has been overlooked not only by one or two, but by all the doctors of human and divine philosophy, as far as I have been able to ascertain. Yet by building upon the discoveries they *did* make, we can lift a significant burden from our own inquiry. But there are very apt aids and

supports for this work, which you will find hidden in their volumes, with which it is necessary to deal diligently no more for the invention of the cause than for the confirmation of the truth.

Such is that outstanding thing which we explained yesterday from the Epistle of Jerome. “I perceive your minds have conceived no little delight in discussing this name JESUS; I will add something of laughter so that you may be more delighted; hear my countenance smiling.”

By mathematical reason I find that a body is composed of a multitude, as it is necessary for the fourth, as in simplicity for the unit; so that the closer any thing approaches to unity, the more spiritual it is and more separated from the appendages of matter.

We have the Word of God in that most simple spiritual divinity, which is designated by unity itself; whose mark, from the Hebrew disciplines, the Tetragrammaton name is said to contain those four vocal characters. It remains to seek the body of the incarnate one, his character. Let us look to multitude, and to the time of the incarnation, so that from the proportion of the sign to the signified, we may be allowed to become more perspicacious.

First, for the sake of our salvation he came into the world; at what age he assumed a body for us? Apollo, consenting to respond to me, rightly says: “In the last or most recent days.” For we are in the last days into which the ends of the ages have come.

But concerning the ages of the world, diverse authors have handed down various things. Some poets affirm there are four ages of the world. Heliodorus says five, in the manner of the Danielic statue. Others, according to the hexaemeron by which God created all things. The rest say seven, which is what I think; and those who share my opinion, they divide the ages this way: they say the future age is the seventh age. For then God will create a new heaven and a new earth; and he will make all things new, as the holy scriptures indicate. Therefore, it will not be an age of this world,

but a certain new world: and it will no longer be the Sabbath which the Hebrews observe, but a "Sabbath of Sabbaths," and a duration of eternity, not of time.

Now, however, Christ, who is God the Word and God, came in the flesh in the seventh age of this transient world. I call an "age" a certain state of the world between two great and common changes, its major disturbances.

Indeed, I judge the first age to have been from when the heavens and the earth were perfected with all of their adornments, up to the transgression of Adam. As it is written, "God saw all the things which he had made, and they were very good; and there was evening and morning on the sixth day." Then followed a great change after the seventh day, when God said to Adam: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree... cursed is the earth in your work."

Therefore, from the creation of the world up to the transgression of Adam, I judge it was the first state of the world.

From that time up to the flood of Noah, the second age.

From Noah to Abraham and his circumcision, the third age. This was when the people faithful to God were separated from the idolaters of the Euphrates river. Abraham was named 'Eber', not from the language which his descendants, the sons of Heber, had kept intact, but from the crossing of the Euphrates.

From Abraham to the written law of Moses, and the sacred ceremonies, we will count the fourth age.

The fifth age lasted up to the kingdom of the Hebrews: when, after the destruction of Troy, they

began to measure time by periods called *lustra*.

The sixth age lasted up to the founding of the city of Rome, when Romulus brought his laws, called ‘Curiate,’ to the people. This period began to count years by Olympiads, just as the preceding one did by *lustra*.

The time from Christ up to our own times is the seventh age, marked by the Roman ‘indiction,’ containing the Olympiads or the *lustra* of the earth.

If these divisions of history, written by me, are judged by you not to be negligent, I will rejoice. But let the matter stand thus: I place Christ at the end of the days, to have assumed a body around the seventh age of this world. Moreover, the body, as we said, is to be sought in the concept of multitude, as opposed to the divine unity.

Therefore, if after the unity (which signifies not a number but God) you form the seven numbers from all the numerical signs among the Hebrews, and you enclose in order the groupings of three letters of the arithmetic art, it will appear manifestly in the seventh house, and in the middle place of its connection, the very sign Shin. This signifies the mediator of God and man, who made both one.

Moreover, the connection of the seventh house is specifically this: Resh, Shin, Tav, which in Latin is interpreted as "Head, Tooth, Sign." But Shin is designated, as if by prophecy, predicting that this very letter will be the most suitable character for forming the name Yeshu (Jesus). This is the one God the Father gave as head over all the church, which is his body.

Which Moses seems to have foretold in Deuteronomy, when he says: "If you will hear the voice I-H-V-H, your God"—behold the four vowels of the Tetragrammaton. Then it follows: "All the peoples of the lands will see that the name of the Tetragrammaton is called upon you." This

prophecy, through Kabbalistic understanding, contains nothing else than: "If you will hear the voice of the Tetragrammaton"—that is, when the Tetragrammaton will become audible and utterable—"then the name of the Tetragrammaton will be called upon you through Shin." As if to say: If the ineffable name must be made utterable, it will necessarily be called by the consonant Shin, so that it becomes Yeshu; who will be above you, your head and your lord.

Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Yeshu Christ, who instills in us the knowledge of the true name of his only-begotten Son and our savior. The Greek authors derive this name from healing (*iatros*). But according to the Hebrew grammarians, from saving, so that they think Yeshu is the same as "savior." And yet "savior" is a common name; but Yeshu is a most proper one, fitting for no other than the incarnate Son of God. This is due to the unique variety of letters from which the word consists.

There were many in the memory of the fathers called saviors, named Jesus, but with other letters and other syllables. For no one ever dared to use these specific letters together for his own name, because they thought the whole divinity was contained in them. But whoever was esteemed holy wished that one of those holy letters should be in his name: as Abram became Abraham with the addition of the letter He. And Hosea the son of Nun became Yehoshua (Jesus) when Moses added the first letter of the ineffable name.

We also find a Jeshua in the book of Ezra, and the prophet Habakkuk says, "I will exult in God, Yeshu my God," which is an epithet meaning "salvation," not God's proper name.

However, many there are who are surnamed Jesus in our speech, none of them possesses entirely those letters which the incarnate Word of God does. His excellent name is full of admirable majesty, composed of five letters—from vowels and one consonant—by the wonderful artifice of

the Holy Spirit. Just as he himself is constituted from divine and human essence. For as the rational soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one in Christ.

He pronounces the name Yeshu with the vowels of the Tetragrammaton and one consonant Shin joined together, so that it declares who he is: Yah (God) and Y'shuah (salvation). To whom Isaiah thus speaks: "Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the savior."

It is difficult to believe, O best of men, unless my speech is strengthened by the prophets. Hear Isaiah speaking again: "For Zion's sake I will not be silent... until her savior is lighted as a lamp. And you will call your name new, which the mouth of the Lord will name." If this surname had been common, Christ would not have borne a "new name which the mouth of the Lord named." For the name Joshua was given by Moses, not by God himself.

But let us see if the lamp in its effigy is similar to the consonant Shin in its bodily outlines. In it, a lamp shines; its oil joins the lamp and the light to the fire. Wherefore Solomon sings: "Your name is oil poured forth." Moreover, oil among the Hebrews begins with the letter Shin (Shemen). Therefore, the Shin is the sign of oil, that is, of the poured forth and utterable name.

This oil so imbibes the person of Christ that whatever is said of one nature, you may also perceive to be of the other. Jesus the man was born from the virgin; Yeshu, God, was born from an uncorrupted woman, whence she herself is rightly venerated not only as Christotokos (parent of Christ), but also as Theotokos (mother of God). On which account Nestorius foolishly raved.

Great and worthy of admiration it is to believe that in one person, both God was born, and God died. The Son of God is the Son of Man, and the Son of Man is the Son of God. As Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Why rely solely on the testimony of the apostles? Skeptics and unbelievers could dismiss them as mere flatterers, praising their own teacher. Therefore, let us turn to the highest authority itself, which declares: “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.” The Son of Man descended from heaven, and the Son of God ascended to the Father. As Paul writes: "He who descended, he it is who also ascended above all heavens." And Christ said: "If you will see the Son of Man ascending back to where he was before."

Now you clearly perceive what the oil of divinity, poured forth corporally, is; how it anointed the whole Christ, not as other Christs like Saul or David, whom the grace of the Spirit sanctified; but so that the divinity, remaining in the human, inebriated it substantially by an essential union. Concerning whom the prophet says: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." By this, he was given that more excellent name above his fellows: the name Tetragrammaton, through Shin, that is, Yeshu.

With these five letters, that most holy name Yeshu must be written. Our ancestors, accustomed to abbreviate, depicted it with the first three characters: YSH, just as the Romans designated their forenames with initials.

In this matter, many grammarians, ignorant of Hebrew, thought the Latin aspiration H was part of the name, stumbled in orthography. But unless the gemination of aspiration follows after I and U, how will you imitate the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton? Or how will you affirm it is written with five figures? The five marks with which the Pentagrammaton is formed are essential.

On which we find this among the Sibylline prophecies: "Ἄνθρωπος Ἰησοῦς θεοῦ πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὸ ἀνόμων, σάρκα φορέσει." (Jesus, a man of God's Holy Spirit, crucified by the wicked, will bear flesh.) Therefore there will be four vowels and one consonant.

Your patience has made my speech longer. I ask your pardon for my immodesty. I seem to you to have sufficiently fulfilled the promises about the mirific word.

In that Pentagrammaton Yeshu is the name of the ruler of all things. He testified: "All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth." So that we may know, as Paul writes to the Ephesians, "what is the surpassing greatness of his power... which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens above every principality and power... and he subjected all things under his feet." And "he exalted him," Paul says to the Philippians, "and gave him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Yeshu every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." He has been made so much better than the angels, "as much as he has inherited a more excellent name than they."

From all these commentaries, gather that this is that name in which miracles stand most powerfully. By its lead we dominate over nature itself, and perform admirable things. To it no cunning of names resists, to it the other powers of adjurations yield, and the secrets of things and the energies of arts. To it the celestial stars obey, the infernal divinities, the natural elements, the nocturnal silences, the arcane things of Memphis, the Thessalian poisons, the Chaldean murmurs, the dogmas of Zoroaster, and whatever power the masters of these arts ever drink in—all tremble, obey, supplicates, or certainly, shuddering, flees at its command.

What need is there for more? So much power does that name show, that at its mere effigy or shadow alone, both admirable things and great deeds stand. For it is read that Joshua (Jesus the son of Nun), since he alone bore the image and a shadowy figure of the name, crossed the Jordan, subdued kingdoms, divided the land, and commanded the sun and moon, and they obeyed his voice as God's.

To the integrity of the true name Yeshu so much is fitting, that its final aspiration was turned into another guttural, and the Shin transposed, so that no creature might bear the integral name of the creator. Thus, he who was called Hosea took that surname, so that by the constant recollection of the powerful name he might perform memorable things.

Just as the wise men of the Hebrews handed down concerning Judas Maccabee, that he received his surname from the divine verse: "Who is like you among the strong, O Tetragrammaton?" By the persevering remembrance of which, he was endowed with memorable virtue from heaven.

Truly, not only the body of Peter, but also his shadow freed the infirm. And the handkerchiefs and aprons taken from Paul's body, placed upon the sick in that name, restored health, not only from sickness, but also from wicked spirits.

Certainly, from no other power than because they were a memorial of the true name Yeshu, or a certain latent attraction of its virtue, or even the very number of the name, which is the cross of the crucified.

For just as the Pentagrammaton is the spiritual figure of Christ, about which Paul discusses: "No one can say 'Lord Yeshu' except by the Holy Spirit," so the cross of the same is the bodily sign of Christ.

Therefore, as our life is constituted from two parts, the speculative and the active, so all this divine duty: the theoretical knowledge of the name Pentagrammaton, and the practical use of the cross, are conjoined. If they are found together, you will experience nothing left unaccomplished. Separated, it is necessary that the one be the symbol of the other, one brought forth sensibly in sign, the other borne mentally in intention, each with ardent faith.

This is that mirific word which you have long been expecting, the portentific word, the deific word, indeed God the Word and the Word God, and the name of the Word Yeshu, and the Word of the name Yeshu, and the same Yeshu is the Word and the Name, who is the Lord of lords.

This we learned from Psalm 82: "And let them know that you, your name is Lord." Therefore, the same incarnate Son of God is his very name Yeshu, which is not other than the name of the Lord Tetragrammaton, except by the assumption of one letter Shin. This letter suffuses the first syllable with the divinity of the second syllable, that is, the human nature imbibed with the poured forth oil. Whence we have shown that the name is oil. For both among the Hebrews begin with Shin. Shem (name) and Shemen (oil), by which the whole name Yeshu is made utterable.

It penetrates our mind if it is fitted by anointing, and fills it with the most pleasing liquor of divinity to such an extent that its liquid receives in itself all the splendors of the sciences.

Wherefore it deserves to be called not only mirific, but also presaging. Concerning which, hear the Epistle of John: "And you, the anointing which you have received from him, remains in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as his anointing teaches you concerning all things." Considering which, Paul judged that he knew nothing except Yeshu Christ.

In vain, therefore, do we flee to the soothsayers and the magi, and the Egyptian disciplines, since we ourselves hold a more certain formula: the familiar divinity of one name, resulting in easy ceremonies and incredible powers. We who bear in our mouth the dominion over all nature and the command of every secret power in heaven and on earth.

Thus Jeremiah, speaking in the Lamentations: "The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord." But let us put aside the deadly secrets of songs, and the madness of the shades, and the arts of exorcism, and the power of making gods from paste, and the Colchian deceptions, and the demonic factions.

Finally, the Platonic volumes and the books of shadows, and the Stygian confederations, and the Acherontic rites let us hand over to the consuming fire, to which also the authors themselves of this madness were assigned.

And let us have an unsullied, sincere, and pure confidence in the God by whom we live and move and are, who, promising infallibly, said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he also will do, and greater than these he will do... And whatever you will ask the Father in my name, this I will do... If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

These are the divine testimonies, these the monuments of our deeds, these the purest signs, contained in a few things, with an easy rite, with no apparatus.

This our art is more sublime than heaven, deeper than Tartarus, free from dangers, a conqueror of the shadowy enemy, needing neither incense nor wine, spurning all the manes, all the lemures, all the larvae, and driving away with cheerful face the empty terrors and the nocturnal phantoms, uniting fate and nature. And whatever we should wish, if the method handed down by the master is observed, incessantly effecting and indefectibly fulfilling.

That man is reported, lame from his mother's womb, carried to Jerusalem, so that before the doors of the temple he might seek his living by his infirmity. But Peter said to him: "In the name of Yeshu Christ the Nazarene, rise and walk." And leaping up, he stood and walked.

The master cured all weaknesses and put to flight all demons. But also the disciple said to the dead Dorcas: "Tabitha, arise," and she revived in Joppa. And Aeneas, for eight years a paralytic, was freed by the same Peter, saying: "Aeneas, the Lord Yeshu Christ heals you; rise and make your bed," and immediately he arose.

Paul in Macedonia cast out the spirit of Python from a girl with these words: "I command you in the name of Yeshu Christ to come out from her," and it came out at the same hour. Moreover, through the hands of the apostles many signs and prodigies were done among the people, who prayed to God: "Lord, grant to your servants to speak your word with all confidence, in that you extend your hand to heal, and signs and prodigies to be done through the name of your holy Son Yeshu." And when they were praying, the place where they were gathered was moved.

Hermione, the daughter of Philip the Apostle, and Petronilla, a disciple of Paul, taught medicine, and healed all by the invocation of Yeshu Christ. By which word also Theophilus, the presbyter Philotheus, turned rivers into wine, removed a great rock by speaking, and provided bread to the hungry.

In Jerome the presbyter, you have read about the life of Hilarion of Palestine, with many admirable things. For instance, a certain candidate of the Emperor Constantius, from Francia of Germany, was possessed by a demon. He was led to Hilarion, and the holy man responded: "I do not care how you entered, but I command that you go out in the name of our Lord Yeshu Christ." Thus also, with Yeshu invoked, he restored three boys' corpses to life and health.

The whole book is almost full of admirable things. Consider how much power the town of Epidaurus in Dalmatia felt from the cross in a great earthquake, by which the seas were threatening a flood. When already almost overturned, Hilarion painted three signs of the cross on a tablet, extending his hand against the inundation, and soon the sea, swelling with incredible height, lapsed back. I am silent about with what virtue he repelled pirates, tamed a raging camel, and freed Orioh from a legion of demons crying out in him.

Demons indeed still tremble when the name of Christ is invoked, as Nazianzen says. Nor has the power of so great a name vanished, from that time when Christ, as Mark testifies, spoke: "In my name they will cast out demons." In Luke, we read that the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name." And he said to them: "Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will harm you."

Thus Paul on the island of Melita shook off a viper clinging to his hand into the fire, and he was unharmed. (This was not Mitylene in Lesbos, but the island called Melita). From there he was led to Syracuse and Rhegium and Puteoli, and at last to Rome, so that traveling widely, the knowledge of so great a name always became known among the various nations.

Thus Sylvester shut up a dragon in the Capitol; and Philip put to flight Leviathan in the name of Yeshu. John the Evangelist expelled a demon in the temple of Diana at Ephesus, which had dwelt there for two hundred and forty-nine years, saying: "I forbid you in the name of Yeshu Christ the Nazarene, that you no longer dwell here," and immediately the demon departed. By which fact it happened that by the order of Domitian, the saint was deported into exile on the island of Patmos, where he performed immense miracles through the name of Yeshu. This struck the priests of Apollo, who reported the matter to Cynops, the prince of the magi on that island.

Cynops, to relieve the priests of Apollo, promised to send evil angels against John to kill him. He sent one of the malignant spirits to Phora, upon whom he had laid a cruel sentence of death. As it was slipping into the house of Myron where John was staying, John, foreseeing the matter, immediately said to the demon: "I forbid you in the name of Yeshu Christ to move from this place until you openly confess by whose order you have come."

The spirit stood fixed by the word as if bound by a chain. John said again: "Go on, say why you have approached this house."

The spirit responded: "The priests of Apollo turned to Cynops with lamentation, predicting many evils about you. They urged him to come to the city to kill you. Cynops, who had sat in that desert for many years and had never come to the city for a greater cause, now thought it not right to leave for the sake of this homicide. So, commanding me as I was about to go, he ordered that I should bring your soul to him, which he prepared to deliver to judgment."

But John said: "Were you not sent before by him to take away anyone's soul?" The spirit responded: "Certainly I was sent, and I killed someone, but I have taken away no soul." John said: "Why do you obey him?" The spirit replied: "All the power of Satan inhabits there; and he made a conspiracy with all the principalities, and we know him; and Cynops obeys us, and we in turn obey him." John said: "Listen, malignant spirit. John the Apostle of the Son of God Yeshu Christ commands you never henceforth to go out to ambush man, nor to depart from this place."

Because that demon did not return, the Magician sent another, who remained with a similar outcome. He sent again two of the princes, one entering the house, the other standing outside to see what would happen. The one entering remained by the same command; the one standing at the door returned swiftly to announce to the Magician what had happened.

Upon this, Cynops, inflamed with fury, summoned the whole cohort of demons and went into the city. The whole city applauded seeing Cynops, and all were worshipping him. But when he learned that John was teaching publicly, he was filled with the highest anger, and said to the people: "Blind and erring men, listen to the truth. If John is good and his words are right, he will care for you as

well as me through the speech I will address to him. I myself will also believe his words and deeds."

Then the magus, seizing a young man, asked him, “Do you recognize your father?” The youth, whose father was deceased, replied in confusion, “What do you mean? He is dead.” The magus explained, “He was a sailor who drowned, suffocated by the force of the waves in a storm at sea.”

Then Cynops, turning to John, said: "Now show if the things which you preach are true, and bring back the father of this youth from the sea, and restore him living to this boy and to all of us." To which John responded: "Christ did not send me to raise the dead, but to teach those who err."

Then the Magus, now furious towards the people, said: "Now, now you see, O people of Phora, that this man is a seducer who leads you astray with magical illusions. Apprehend and hold him until he restores the living father to the youth."

Therefore, they seized John. But Cynops, with palms outstretched towards the shores of the sea, stamping, produced a huge crashing sound in the sea, and thus he disappeared from their eyes. All present cried out: "Great are you, Cynops, and there is no one besides you." Soon the Magus ascended from the waters, having, as he said, the father of the boy. All were astonished and amazed. He said to the boy: "Is this your father?" Who responded: "Indeed, lord, it is he." And all worshipped Cynops, and they decided to kill John. But the Magus forbade this, saying: "After you will see much greater things than these, that’s when you can at last afflict him most badly."

Then, Cynops addressed a woman. "Did you have a son?" he asked her. "I did, my lord," she replied, "but he was killed by treachery, murdered in an ambush." "Shall your son live again?" Cynops said to her. Then he called out in a clear voice, summoning by name the very man who had committed the murder. Immediately, two men appeared: the slain son and his killer.The son

identified himself, and Cynops, pointing to the other man, asked the woman, "Is this your son? And is this the one who killed him?" The woman responded: "Why certainly, lord!"

Looking at John, the magus said: "Are you not amazed?" To which John replied: "I am by no means amazed at these things." And again the magus: "You will see greater things than these and then you will admire." To whom John spoke: "Certainly your signs will soon be dissolved." Hearing this, the crowd so pressed the holy man that he fell as if about to die.

But Cynops, thinking him now dead, exclaimed: "Do not bury him under the earth, so that the birds of heaven may devour him, and let us see then if his Christ revives him." Therefore, each one firmly opining him to be dead, went away together with Cynops, praising and glorifying him.

But when the Magus heard that John was still alive and had gone to a place in the city called Lithobolos to preach, he went again with his demons (by whose ministry he practiced Necromancy), followed by a crowd of many men. Among them walked the two revived men, who, although they were demons, were thought to be men.

Then the Magus said to John, "I prevented them from killing you so I could inflict a far greater humiliation upon you and cover you in disgrace. Therefore, come with me to the harbor. There you will witness my true power, and your awe will be that much greater."

So John went with the entire crowd to the port. As they went, he secretly commanded the demons, who were disguised as the resurrected men, to stay by his side and not to leave.

Then, with hands clashed together and making a terrible sound, Cynops, as before, threw himself into the sea, and vanished from the eyes of all, who did not cease to cry out: "Great are you, Cynops, and there is no one besides you."

John meanwhile was praying to the Lord that the Magus might no longer be counted among the living. Then suddenly a murmur of the sea came, a noise was heard, and with storms rushing upon that place where he had thrown himself, he appeared no more.

The demons who were standing under human form, as if revived from the dead, were adjured by the Apostle of God, who said: "In the name of the crucified Yeshu Christ, go into exile from this island, never to return." And immediately they disappeared from the eyes of all who were expecting Cynops to rise again from the strait.

When at last they waited for him for three days and three nights, very many of them, weakened by hunger, thirst, and the sea air, falling as if mute, died on the earth. From these, three youths died, whom John, taking pity at last, raised up, preaching to the people the things which lead to salvation. They, approaching Christ, were baptized, leaving the Magus as another Pharaoh in the depth of the sea.

I could recite far more about that holy Evangelist, and the great virtues of our most holy and mirific name he displayed on land and sea. How, returning from the island after the death of the Emperor Domitian, he raised his Drusiana from the dead with this word alone: "Yeshu Christ, let Drusiana rise. Arise and go prepare dinner for me at home." Thus also Thomas the Apostle raised a woman long dead. And in the name of Yeshu, Bartholomew commanded the sun and expelled a demon visibly. But the whole day would fail me, and you would perhaps be affected by tedium. Let it be enough to have added this much.

Understand that just as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in men, so the name of the Father is glorified through the Son, and the name of the Son is glorified through men. The name of the Son

and the Father is one, except for the consonant letter, just as the Son and the Father are one, except for the nature of humanity.

Wherefore he truly said: "O Father, I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me. The words which you gave to me, I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we also are one. I in them and you in me, that they may be confirmed into one, and I have made your name known to them, and I will make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

You are not ignorant, since you hear all the stupendous operation and the perfect doctrine of all admirable things. This is the art, this is the foundation, this is the discipline; this is the philosopher’s stone, far indeed surpassing that about which the erring Alchemists contend. This is the voice.

These are the characters by which omnipotence is invoked for doing things beyond the common mode of life. Concerning which Zechariah: "He will invoke my name, and I will hear him."

With three characters in the time of nature, with four characters in the time of the law, and with five characters in the time of grace, the divine omnipotence was invoked.

"I am the Tetragrammaton who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty (Shaddai), and my name Adonai I did not make yet known." And it follows: "And I will take you to me as a people, and I will be your God, and you will know that I am Adonai."

You have heard Moses; hear the Evangelist and the Apostle of God. "This is his commandment," he says, "that we believe in the name of his Son Yeshu Christ."

Join all these things together, and you will easily recognize that the most powerful virtue has appeared everywhere through:

- The name Trigrammaton of the ancestors: SDI (Shaddai).
- The name Tetragrammaton of the fathers: ADNI (Adonai).
- The name Pentagrammaton of the sons: IHSVH (Yeshu).

For now we are sons of God; therefore we use five letters, on account of him in whom we believe, and whom we invoke as the mediator of God and man, the same God and man, the arm and power of the most high God.

If you wish, therefore, to do all things securely, as Paul to the Colossians, so I advise you: "Whatever you do in word and in work, do all that in the name of our Lord Yeshu Christ."

- This is the preserver of health, this the medicine, or rather this is our health and healing. Thus Peter spoke about the restoration to health: "Let it be known to all of you... that in the name of our Lord Yeshu Christ the Nazarene... by him this man stands here before you whole." For there is no other name under heaven given to men in which we must be saved.
- This is the court, this the portico, this the door, this the first gate to God.
- This is the washing by which we are cleansed. As Paul says: "You have been washed, you have been sanctified, and you have been justified in the name of our Lord Yeshu Christ."
- This is our adoption. "For God gave the faculty to us to become sons of God, who believe in his name."
- This is our reward. "For whoever will give a cup of water in that name will not lose his reward."

- This is the fulfillment of our will. "If you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you."
- This is our consolation. "For the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Father will send... in the name of Yeshu."
- This is our life. "That you may know that you have eternal life in the name of his Son."
- This is religion, this our reverence: "That in the name of Yeshu every knee should bow..."
- This is vengeance against the impious: "Because they are already condemned, because they do not believe in the name of the only-begotten Son."
- This is the perfect joy for the pious: "Ask, that your joy may be full."
- This is the adjuration and exorcism: "I beseech you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Yeshu Christ."
- This is boldness, this our confidence. For Paul acted with confidence in the name of Yeshu.
- This is the presence of God, for he said: "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."

But believe me, there is no Christ without the cross. His cross is our victory. Moses with outstretched hands prefigured the cross and defeated Amalek. And in Ezekiel, the sign of the cross saves those marked with it. The cross is the character of the greater power, which, without the name Yeshu, has no effective virtues. Therefore we both seek and find the recent name with the cross, and the cross with the name.

This is the sign of the Son of Man which will be seen in heaven. This is the tree of the second paradise, the tree of life, a tree desirable for seeing, and beautiful to the eyes and delightful in

appearance, not forbidden but offered. "On whatever day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods."

This is the mirific wood which the Lord showed to Moses, through which he turned the bitter waters into sweetness. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying: What shall we drink? But he cried out to the Lord, who showed him the wood."

What need was there in the desert of Sur to show a tree, when there were so many trees at hand? But in the Hebrew word, it is put in this place, which signifies to institute, to demonstrate, to teach, and to set down a law. By which it can be understood that God revealed to his prophet by a secret doctrine the virtue of this cross. Wherefore scripture does not say: "Take for yourself wood," but "God showed him the wood," which could be read: "The Lord instructed him concerning the cross," or "God demonstrated to him the cross."

This is that face which the royal prophet desired, having modulated this song: "Show your face, and we shall be saved." And if the Pythagorean philosophy or the Kabbalah of the Hebrews does not displease you, you will find the same: ‘statue,’ ‘wood,’ ‘cross,’ and ‘your face’ will be, upon which you have heard David crying out to the Lord.

Therefore, with the cross and not without the cross, our operation will be easy. Those who act otherwise lose their work and expense, they labor in vain, and are near to danger.

Certain itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke over those who had evil spirits the name of the Lord Yeshu, saying: "I adjure you by the name which Paul preaches." But responding, the wicked spirit said to them: "I know Yeshu and I know Paul; but you, who are you?" And the man in whom was the demon, leaping upon them, overpowered and dominated both, so that they fled naked and wounded from that house.

Therefore, those not observing the mode of the cross and the law will work things worthy not of admiration but of punishment. For the word or reason of the cross is foolishness to the perishing, but to the saved, it is the power of God.

But what sort of thing this highest word of the cross is, and what that reason is, O most learned men, this great secret of the mirific word and most hidden mystery, Dionysius the Areopagite mentions in a few words in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.

Since these arcane matters, namely the veiled and most secret symbols, ought not to be scattered to the air, but rather whispered in the ear, I would wish you to approach nearer. So that I may inspire you with my breath.

Capnion turned to Sidonius.

"Do you understand?"

"I understand," Sidonius said.

Capnion: "Guard this mystery. Be silent, keep the secrets, master them, hold your peace, and meditate on them inwardly."

He then turned to Baruchias.

“And you, Baruchias, offer your ear likewise. Have you received it rightly?"

He responded: "I indeed well enough."

Finally, he addresses the reader.

“And to you also, I forbid to publish it to the vulgar. For whatever you ask in this manner, He will give to you.”

Now therefore I will depart. Farewell in good health and divinely worship the mirific word.

THE THIRD BOOK OF JOHANNES REUCHLIN OF PFORZHEIM, CAPNION, ON THE WONDER-WORKING WORD, ENDS HAPPILY.